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# STYLE IN MUSICAL ART



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TORONTO

# STYLE IN MUSICAL ART

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## PREFACE

THE following Chapters are for the most part founded on Lectures delivered in accordance with the regulations which prescribe the duties of the Professor of Music of Oxford University.

The scheme was devised at the beginning of the tenure of the Professorship in order to give continuity and coherence to a series extending over many years. But a breakdown in health, which was the result of trying to keep too many lines of work in hand at once, entailed the resignation of the Professorship before the series was completed.

The present volume is intended to represent the scheme in its entirety. In recognition of the fact that the style that is fit for a lecture is not fit to be read, the originals have been for the most part rewritten, several lectures have been omitted as unnecessary in the changed conditions, and chapters which cover the ground originally planned have been added.

C. H. H. P.



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# I

## FORECAST

(*Oxford Inaugural Lecture, March 7, 1900.*)

ONE can hardly think of style in anything whatever without being importunately haunted by the familiar French saying, which conveys to the superficial mind the view that manner counts for more than man. In any case "*Le style c'est l'homme*" compares unfavourably with the more ancient saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them," but it is possible that it was not intended to attribute so much importance to externals as the aptitude of men for misunderstanding things which are too tersely stated leads them to infer. There are thousands of things by which a man's nature may be gauged besides style. Everything that is part of him may in some sense be a gauge of him. Just as a great naturalist has been said to be able to reconstruct some unknown animal from a single bone, men say a man's nature can be told by the shape of his nose or his hand, or the expression of his mouth, by his walk, by the tone of his voice. Everything may serve the quick-witted as a basis of inference, though all may not be equally trustworthy. Style is mainly

an external attribute—a means to an end, and in no wise comparable to actual qualities of character or action in man, or the thought embodied in what is said in poetry, or the idea embodied in art. But, at the same time, neither man nor art can do without it. It is present in everything which has real vitality, and in every moment of art's existence, and as it is infinitely variable in relation to the conditions in which artistic work is presented, it serves as a very comprehensive means of estimating the genuineness either of man or of artistic work.

Differences of style are the outcome of the instinct for adaptation. In art the most perfect style is that which is most perfectly adapted to all the conditions of presentment. Many different factors minister to its development. The influences which are most obvious are the properties of material. If a work has to be executed in stone the particular qualities of the material necessitate a style of art different from that of works executed in iron. The effects which can aptly be produced in one material are quite different from those which can be produced in another. The result of trying to imitate in one kind of material effects which can be produced in another which has quite different properties is either stupid or false in proportion to the dexterity of the worker; and style is either gratifying or repulsive in proportion to its just relation to its conditions. There is a technique of life also, as well as of art, and the style of every section of society varies in accordance with its conditions; and the outcome of attempts to adopt a style belonging to one branch of society in a branch of society whose conditions of life are altogether different is a familiar form of what is called vulgarity.

When we come to apply these considerations to music we find circumstances of the same nature. In music the simplest parallel to the differences of material in plastic arts lies in the varieties of means by which music is to be performed and made appreciable to sense. All music which is worthy of the name must in the nature of things be written to be performed by instruments or voices; and they all have their particular idiosyncrasies. Organs have their special aptitudes and their special inaptitudes; and the music which is written for them, if it is to attain to any degree of artistic perfection, must be based upon a recognition of the fact. Violins have their special powers of expression and effect, and their special limitations; horns have theirs, and trombones theirs. Voices can do certain things that instruments cannot do, and all instruments can do things which voices cannot do. There is, as it were, a dialect appropriate to each instrument and each class of voice; and there even are ideas which can be better expressed in one dialect than another; and the employment of any particular means of utterance, whether violins, pianofortes, organs, hautboys, bassoons, voices, harps, or trumpets, is only justified when they are used for passages which can be given with fullest effect by them.

If there is a style for each individual member of the orchestra, even more essentially is there a style for the orchestra as a whole. It is capable of almost unlimited complexities of rhythm and figure, of varieties of colour which are countless. In power of tone it is tremendous, in depth of expression infinite. To venture to put such an engine of power into motion at all seems to be courting responsibility.



And to put it into motion to utter things which would be quite adequately expressed by a pianoforte or a set of voices is like calling the House of Lords together to cook a homely omelet. Few people hear orchestral music often enough to realize what the highest instrumental style is. But any one who has any sense of the adequate adaptation of technique to material or means of performance realizes the absurdity of choral music written in the style of a brass band or organ music which is mere pianoforte music or orchestral music in disguise. But the hurry and lack of concentration of modern life, and the desire of purveyors of music to ingratiate a public which has neither discrimination nor education, and the habit of playing such a vast amount of arrangements, all tend to dull people's sense of the essential meaning of musical style, and to make composers miss the higher artistic opportunities in the urgent desire to gratify the ephemeral whims of fashion.

But style is far from being regulated only by the essential peculiarities of the instruments by which the music is to be performed. Every detail in the situation for which the music is intended, the attitude of mind to which it is to appeal, and the circumstances under which it is to be performed, have their bearing upon the methods suitable to be employed, and therefore upon the style. When music is intended for domestic consumption it entails a totally different style from that which would be suited to some great public function. It entails its being pure enough to live with, and rich enough to sustain constant interest, and a level of thought more near to the contemplative than to the active, while the music of the public function must be stirring and brilliant, direct and forcible, and attains

its highest standard when it is elevating and noble in diction. Even in characteristic deteriorations the differences of style peep out. The risks of the domestic style are sentimentality and languorous and unhealthy sensuosity, and the risk of the public-rejoicing style is blatancy.

Of style in relation to attitude of mind and mood that of the old Church music is probably most characteristic. Its contemplative and devotional character, its quietude and inwardness, were partly owing to the limited development of artistic technique before the latter part of the sixteenth century, and to the fact that no other style was sufficiently developed to distract the minds of composers. The effect of such circumstances and of the attitude of submission to the authority of the Church was to produce a style so subtly consistent and so perfectly regulated that hardly anything in the range of modern art can compare with it. The instant true secular music came into being this perfect aptness was doomed. The secular phrascology could not be kept out of it, and in no great space of time submerged the devotional element, and the hybrid which resulted was of the most mixed quality, sometimes even divinely beautiful, and at others grossly repulsive; sometimes vibrating with human love and tenderness, and sometimes redolent of the most nauseous vulgarities of the opera. But in either case the style was mainly governed by the attitude of mind to which the composers intended to appeal.

Conspicuous differences of style are induced by different conditions of presentment. This is obviously the case in respect of music which is associated with words and music intended to be performed without

them. In music associated with words it is absolutely inevitable that the mood and expression of phrase and figure and melody and harmony, and even of form, must be in close and intimate relation with them. The more perfect the instinct of the composer for the musical equivalents of the sentiments expressed by the words, the more perfect will be the style; and the more perfect the invention which can dispose of the ingredients in an effective and original manner, the more complete the work of art. The composer has the moods and details of expression supplied him, and the hearers understand the music through its relation to the words. But in music that is intended to be performed without words the composer is himself answerable for the moods he presents, and he has to find inherent justification for every bar he writes in some artistic, intellectual, emotional, or aesthetic principle. To write music for instruments in the style of vocal music is doubly fatuous; for it is inadequate on the grounds that not only can instruments do so much more than voices, but that the absence of words leaves the music entirely without ostensible reason for existence, when there is little or no intrinsic interest in the workmanship.

Even in the various departments of word-music and wordless music there are infinite shades of variety of style. The music of the theatre absolutely demands a method and style different from that appropriate to the vocal music of the concert-room, and from the style of the domestic art song. The dramatic music of the theatre derives both advantages and disadvantages from its associations with scenery and action. For, while the mind is distracted in one respect, and pays no attention to artistic qualities which would be prominent

in a quartet or a symphony, it is helped in others which would be out of place in instrumental music. The listener would probably miss the development of figures and the subtleties of abstract design if he attended to the drama, but would be quick to feel the intention and purpose of progressions, harmonies, resolutions, and successions of keys which, though unintelligible without the words, become vividly effective from the situations with which they are associated and the development of passion which they portray. In songs which are not intended for the theatre, the qualities and methods used in quartets and sonatas are much more appropriate, because the mind is less distracted from the music itself, and has more attention to spare for interesting constructive features and subtleties of detail. In the just apportionment of style for emotional and dramatic effects in theatrical music and domestic music the resources are so different that they can hardly be judged on the same footing. People who judge of what is dramatic in the light of what is histrionic would hesitate to call anything dramatic which was in the true style of a solo song. But indeed there is a just way of expressing tragedy, pathos or despair in the style suited to solo song, and a just but different way of expressing it for the stage. The opportunities of the one are more analytical and subtle, and of the other more direct and sensational. It is by no means essential that a thing shall be in histrionic style in order to justify a claim to being dramatic, and the same is the case with the song style—for both are limited by the more delicate instinct of highly organized artistic beings in such a way that much which would be admirable in one style is positively vulgar in the other.

But if the provinces of two different kinds of vocal music are so strongly distinct, the differences between the style and even the material of operatic music and pure instrumental music are more striking still. The differences of method are so pronounced that the histrionic and the absolute seem to represent distinct territories in the musical art; and most people who call themselves musical live almost entirely in one of them, and make little effort to appreciate the good features of the other. It cannot be said that either party has all the right on their side. It is quite true that people who are very fond of the opera are most frequently not musical at all in any sense. But there are a good many who really judge it from the artistic point of view and understand it, and are perfectly justified in objecting to operas written in the style and with the methods belonging to instrumental music.

On the other hand, it may fairly be said that men of high artistic taste and perception, habituated to the purer style of absolute instrumental music, are not altogether liberal in their judgment of operatic music, and are not sufficiently ready to admit what is admirably devised for its conditions. They are apt to fall into the misconception that because certain principles of form and procedure are almost indispensable to instrumental music, any music in which they do not find them is necessarily bad. In this connection it is impossible not to think of the violent antipathy which Wagner's style produced in men of intelligence and cultivated taste. His mature style was certainly as strongly different from that of composers of instrumental music as it is possible to conceive. It was the product of a disposition more essentially dramatic

and poetically imaginative than musical. It repelled musicians who appreciated highly the time-honoured methods of art which had been consecrated by the greatest masters of instrumental music, because the composer aimed, with an instinct of genius never before shown in such a degree, at a style which was essentially adapted to the conditions of the stage; with all the distractions of the acting, the scenic display, and the interest of the drama. It repelled, because the composer in the instinctive search after a new ideal of style disregarded all the conventions which had grown up in connection with the only branches of art which had hitherto been really mastered. It disregarded the classical rules of resolution of discords, progressions of chords, conventions of design, and clearness of tonality. Yet to the great mass of cultivated people his ideal of style proved convincing. He at all events did not make the mistake of supposing that his principles of procedure were applicable to independent instrumental music of any kind. That mistake was left to his imitators.

The unsuitableness of the operatic style for instrumental music is obvious to all people of taste and artistic intelligence; but in truth the employment in operas of the style which has been developed for pure instrumental music is just as futile. In both cases it is the employment of resources which have been developed for one group of conditions in conditions to which they are unsuited. There is no reason why operatic music should not be just as well provided with beauty and interest of detail as instrumental music. Coarseness and commonness of texture are not confined to operatic music, though found there more frequently than in other branches

of art. There is plenty of flabby and conventional instrumental music, which the world has gladly let drop and be forgotten. The difference of style which is entailed by the bestowal of loving care on details or indifference to them is more a question of disposition than a necessary basis of contrast between operatic art and instrumental art. The difference is illustrated in the widest sense by the broad distinctions between the tastes of the southern and the northern races. The southern races seem to delight in what is voluptuous, and in the elements of art which appeal to sense. They set no great store on purity, and enjoy their art with indifferent promiscuity rather than with love and reverence. The northern races treat their art with more respect, and look for qualities of virginal purity upon which they can dwell with constant loving contemplation. The southern delight in broad sweeping effects, in which details are of little consequence. The northern, without losing anything in general imposing effect, love to make every part of their artistic work vital and interesting, so that nowhere shall commonness and the insincerity of indolence or convention be visible.

The effect is shown in a very interesting phase by the story of organ music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Italians set the ball rolling in grand style with the help of many noble composers, of whom Frescobaldi was chief. But deterioration soon set in when a facile style was adopted, in which the details were merely conventional formulas; and the southern school of organists came to worse than nothing; while the northern organists, putting their whole souls into every part of their work, rose higher and higher, and attained

first to the luxury of fancy and richness of appropriate detail which is shown in the works of Buxtehude, and ultimately to the supreme ideal of the highest possibilities of art in the work of J. S. Bach.

The work carried out with real love and devotion has a higher and more permanent interest than work done under a more vague and uncritical impulse. The difference in such respects between the southern and the northern attitude is well illustrated in the respective styles of Handel and Bach. Bach's style was evolved in the intense devotion to personal ideals. Though he studied all schools of art and absorbed from all quarters such principles as were available for his peculiar artistic disposition, he always worked with the true northern bias to present his thoughts with perfection of detail as well as of general impression; and the subordinate features of his work are therefore in the highest degree interesting and rich; while Handel, following general public taste, which was mainly Italian, aimed at greatness of general impression, at what have been described as cosmic effects, and was often voluptuous in melody and conventional in phraseology, and his work presented much less interest in the details. Handel holds his own by sheer weight of greatness, but the works of a large number of lesser composers who have worked on the same lines and in the same style have deservedly fallen into complete oblivion.

Qualities of style are eminently illustrative of sincerity of intention. The periods in which men wrote half-heartedly, with no genuine personal intensity, prove in the end to be styleless. If the style is not distinctive, the product frequently proves to be intrinsically worthless. The truly great individual



masters of style are such as we know to have been passionately in earnest, and deeply absorbed in the endeavour to attain an ideally perfect presentation of their thoughts. Beethoven and Bach, who had the most consistent degree of personal style, attained to it by infinite labour in pruning, rewriting, remodelling, and constant self-criticism. The composers who had phenomenal facility are by no means those whose style is most individual. Handel was individual in his greatness, but not in the manner of his diction. Mozart was pre-eminent in his sense of beauty, not in the originality of his manner. The most striking and persistent qualities are such as belong to the adamantine natures, not to those which are most easily malleable. The rugged manner of Carlyle cost himself and his friends untold misery ; and the powerfully distinctive style of Brahms must have cost him extraordinary concentration of faculty, even if he mended and pruned less than Bach and Beethoven.

At the same time style cannot be gauged by the amount of individuality which is expressed by it, however much that compels conviction, for there are infinite shades of it which are good, so far as they are apposite. As there is a style for the greatest things, so there is for the least. There is a style for the music hall, which of its kind may be good and consistent, as well as for the grandest works of art. A great deal of the low and repulsive vulgarity to be met with in such quarters arises from the fact that the true ratio of style has not been found. Even popular comic operas can be admirable when the true style has been found ; when they are repulsive it is mainly because the makers of them have no sense of style at all. And it would be absurd to consider the

style of light art as of no consequence. There must be in all men's lives infinite degrees of mood, from serious to playful. It is a very poor nature that can never be gay ; but it is of great importance that the gaiety shall be of good and honest quality, and not degenerate into brutishness. And it seems to be even more important in this country than elsewhere. For almost the only English music which has been cordially welcomed by the great mass of average English people throughout the world is the music of farce and topsy-turvydom. It is probably the outcome of that dislike of appearing to be pedantic and solemn, characteristic of certain classes, which causes them to refuse to take music anyhow but as a joke. Such taste in music is the counterpart of the habit of persiflage which has been justly attributed to a large section of upper-class wealthy society, which does not necessarily imply an incapacity for being serious and devoted, but a dislike of showing it. It is an affectation of nonchalance which is really more dangerous in art than it is in everyday life. For the persistent habit of using an art, which is one of man's most sacred inventions, for mere trifling and fooling, is not only a degradation and an insult to the art, but is bound to produce deterioration of the standard of appreciation, and a lowering of the intention and faculty of composers. English people seem to have less quickness in perception of style than many other nations, especially in things musical. Hence the question of style in light things becomes of the more importance, since, owing to their predisposition for farcical and irresponsible music, lack of style will the more surely leave them wallowing in sheer unalloyed stupidity.

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While insisting that style is a desirable and possible quality in every standard of art, it must be admitted that it is no positive criterion of the quality of the thoughts expressed in the style. The style can be no more than a criterion whether the thing is well expressed or no. Yet style is so closely interwoven with every moment of art's existence that a great thought is hardly separable from the style in which it is expressed; and a great thought which comes from a full heart is almost sure to be expressed in a style which is consistently noble and dignified, whereas a thought that a man is only trying to make appear great is often betrayed by some triviality of detail, some glaring inconsistency of phraseology which betrays the mountebank or the charlatan.

The greatest achievement in point of style is to convey the idea which belongs to the artist or the speaker in its widest significance in the exact terms—no more and no less—which will make it take the most complete hold of the human mind. The perfect style does not weary with superfluous explanations, nor leave in doubt by lack of decisiveness. It anticipates how far a suggestive word will carry the mind, and how much can be left out. It plays with associations, with relations of terms to one another, with the lilt of rhythm and the infinite variety of tone. The resources of artistic appeal to men's sensibilities and intelligence seem almost inexhaustible. But there is a very important consideration, which restricts the range of what is available, and that is the vital urgency of consistency. It is the misuse of resources which is mainly responsible for vulgarity: the hodge-podge of phraseology belonging to the

pulpit and the street; the jumble of symphonic style and the histrionic. Some methods of art are more capable than others of absorbing a great variety of traits drawn from many different quarters. The greater somewhat easily absorbs the less. But yet the greater is soon impaired and its nobility is tarnished by the unseasonable utterance of a triviality. An inconsistency of style may be an accident. But if the accidents recur what seemed to be an accident becomes an essential. Many gifted composers have gone so far as to give the world a noble phrase which seems to have the qualities of fine music. But the impulse does not last. Lack of fibre, lack of the power of persistence, prevents the maintenance of the high level of thought, and then comes the inevitable make-up—mere phrases decked in futile and superfluous ornament; tricks of art which have no real relation to the mood at first suggested. The incapacity to maintain the standard of style betrays the unsubstantiality of the initiatory spasm of inspiration which seemed to promise such great things. The great minds maintain the relevancy of the mood and the style. There is no variableness nor shadow of turning in the rugged Promethean spirit of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, no shuffling make-believe to mar the fiery concentration of the first movement of the Symphony in C minor, no mundane irrelevance to weaken the triumphant sweep as of the singing of an infinite heavenly host in the “Sanctus” of the *B minor Mass*. The consistent elevation of the style is equal to the depth and fervour of the thought.

Things which are expedient with one group of conditions are absolutely inexpedient with others.

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There is a style which is apt for things mundane, and a style which is apt for things devotional; a style for things pathetic, a style for things gay. Trivial phraseology is out of place in times of mourning, tragic violence in times of merriment. And as the style which is inconsistent with the mood makes the product ring false, so is it with inconsistency in relation to conditions of presentment—the operatic work written in the style of absolute music, the instrumental music written in the histrionic style. There may be positive vulgarity in thought, but the greater part of vulgarity arises from misapplication of style. While even things little and light may be made admirable by dexterous consistency of style, the greatest inspirations cannot dispense with it.

In the end style is the sum of the appearances of all the factors which make up a work of art or any living thing. It is the sum of the outward manifestations of qualities. The style of an apple tree is the sum of the appearances produced by the shape, colour, texture, and set of the foliage, the ruddy red of the fruit, and its relation to the colour and character of the foliage, and the angles of the ramifications of the branches. The style of an orange tree is quite different. The glossy leaf, the bright yellow fruit, the scent, the method of growth of the boughs, present quite a different effect, and suggest a different climate and different conditions and surroundings. We can hardly imagine such a monstrosity in nature as a tree made up half in the style of an apple tree and half of an orange. The absurdity of gathering grapes of thorns or figs of thistles is self-evident. Yet the law of consistency in art is just as essential

and as logical as in things organic. The worst fault in style is the mixing up of types which are especially apt to different groups of conditions, different situations, and different attitudes of mind. A perfect work of art is a perfectly organized presentation of an original unity. If grapes are found on one bough and figs on another, men may guess that it is a sham. The perfect adaptation to conditions entails perfect unity of style, and it may be inferred conversely that complete perfection of style is to be found not in intrinsic qualities but in perfect and relevant consistency.

## II

### CHORAL STYLE

To people who find the art of the present quite sufficiently enjoyable and adequate to supply all their needs, the attitude of another sort of people who appear to be superfluously enthusiastic about the products of the past is inevitably rather puzzling. And when these unaccountable people lay much stress upon the discovery of details which to the majority do not seem worth knowing at all, it conduces to some gentle mockery. Indeed it may be fairly admitted that the competition to discover things which are unknown to other explorers makes such people a little indiscriminating; and stress is sometimes laid upon trifles in a manner which shows that their discoverers do not fully understand their meaning. But it may well be that if ardent lovers of early stages of art and poetry had not the predisposition to over-estimate the importance of details, the true qualities which distinguish such art and poetry could not be adequately and truthfully interpreted and reinfused with life.

The more different periods and phases of art, and especially of music, are studied, the more it is seen that types with which the world has completely fallen out of touch, and regards as pure blundering barbari-

ties, have their own methods and purposes; and though the metamorphosis which has been undergone is so complete that at first sight they seem almost unintelligible, by degrees, as the facts are unravelled and put in their places, and the inwardness of their methods are revealed, it becomes clear that the art of the present could not be what it is unless its development had gone through the forgotten phases; and that the men of long past days were engaged in solving just the same problems as the men of the present, though the terms in which they are expressed are now unfamiliar. And it is the ardour of the patient explorers and searchers after unfamiliar details which supplies the means of making these phases again intelligible.

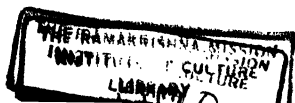
It is not only an enhancement of men's artistic experience which is thus obtained, but also opportunity to understand some of the traits of existing art. The influence which early artistic developments have both upon the character of later art itself, and also upon the taste and appreciation of later generations who give their attention to it, cannot be ignored. Whatever taste and instinct for style remain in modern times are unconsciously adopted from the traditions of art-work of the past, and it is worth while to look back to periods in which mankind had to deal with much simpler artistic problems than those that have to be solved in later times to clear the mind of constant sources of bewilderment. For it must be confessed that though an advanced state of society has great advantages it has some drawbacks. The course of progress is always supposed to be towards certain theoretic ideals, but when they are more or less attained, men find them attended with unexpected



concomitants. Men enlarge the bounds of possible experience and find they have made room for things which are low and degrading, as well as for things which are elevating and beautiful. They widen the range of their activity and find that there are evil powers as well as good that have room for exercise. They increase their capital and find that their liabilities almost counterbalance the advantages they anticipated. The expansion of art brings with it more variety, greater resource, more vivid appeals to men's sensibilities, and closer approach to the actual realities of human feeling ; but it also brings with it the risk of confusion of style, brutality of expression, grossness and baseness of ideas, and a general lowering of the standard of artistic intention. Hence it is that cultured minds which are highly sensitive in taste hark back to the times that are past, and can sometimes hardly bring themselves to regard the developments of modern art with anything but horror. The ancient art appeals to them by its purity and sincerity, and the enormous amount of dross and superfluity in modern art prevents their enjoying the moments of exquisite beauty which are really plentiful in it. The artists of earlier periods had many disadvantages, but at all events they escaped many temptations ; and the very limitations of the sphere of their operations conduced to a purity of style and a singleness and honesty of aim which are among the most permanent guarantees of the worth of human endeavour of any kind whatever. The ancient choral music was most happy in this respect, because confusion of style was almost impossible. The mistakes to which composers were liable did not lie in that direction. Before instrumental music had

begun to exist there was no likelihood of composers trying to produce instrumental effects with voices. Before theatrical music was attempted there was no likelihood of composers endeavouring to devise devotional music in a histrionic style; and before popular march music was thought of they could not use the phraseology of the brass band for their hymns. Their problems seemed to them difficult enough, but they were not enhanced by external distractions. The failures of undeveloped art are not like the failures of over-developed art, any more than the failures of childhood are like the follies of the full-grown man. The primitive artist or composer failed like a child from lack of knowing what to do; the composer of later times, like the grown-up mortal, fails from knowing too much and applying his knowledge ill; the one from lack of models and the other from choosing bad ones. The early composers could concentrate their attention on the development of music which was fit for the voices of human beings to utter, and devised their artistic effects and their artistic methods in relation to that single object without being distracted by other types of art. Hence arises the singular purity of the style of what is called the golden age of choral music; and the perfect balance and relevancy of the whole scheme of art of the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Composers illustrated the rule that men attack and solve their simple problems first, and proceed to the more complicated problems afterwards; for their artistic instinct was content to work on steadily with the single object of finding out methods of art which would produce the most complete and perfect effects with voices alone; and but few and insignifi-



cant attempts were made in any other branches of art till the great masters of the latter part of the sixteenth century had put the crown on that particular phase of development.

The early experimenters in choral music were bound by the obvious limitations of the human voice, and could only proceed step by step in finding out what it could do. Their position was different from that of a modern composer. For he often tries if the human voice can do things which he has heard instruments do, and therefore in many cases introduces confusion of style. But the ancient composer had nothing of the kind either to help or to distract him; and the whole basis of his procedure was the relation of successive notes to one another—in other words, some apprehensible and coherent form of melody. Isolated notes which merely succeed to each other without coherence, such as are often used in instrumental music in modern times, are as repugnant to a mind addressing itself to choral or vocal music as a series of nonsense syllables framing no intelligible words are to the memory of any intelligent being. The true basis of all music which is meant to be executed by voices is melodic coherence. For the voice, being the product of the mind as well as of physical powers, was limited in its capacities of taking some awkward intervals and producing many effects which the cultivation of instrumental music has made familiar. When a starting-point was given, it could take intervals which could easily be thought of, and those only. Hence the earlier composers contented themselves with the simpler diatonic intervals, and there has been a steady progress from those days to this in admitting intervals which are more and more subtle

and difficult to think without external mechanical assistance. It is perfectly obvious that certain intervals appeared to the early composers of choral music as quite unnatural, and for centuries they consistently avoided them; indeed they went so far as to call one of them by an opprobrious name. The melodic succession of intervals which have simple diatonic relations became characteristic of vocal music of all kinds from very early times; and inasmuch as conjunct motion is easier to think and is simpler in its implications than disjunct motion it has been highly characteristic of choral music as distinguished from instrumental music; and it may be added that predominance of conjunct motion is also characteristic of the finest and most elementally dignified melodies, and of serious music of all kinds; possibly because the roots of choral music come from a deeper source and represent a stage of music which is more serious and self-respecting than secular music.

These features are characteristic of single part vocal music as well as of choral music in more than one part. The problem of combining voices presented new difficulties, but the instinct of composers maintained their endeavour to make the separate parts individually melodious. Indeed the earliest attempts at singing in parts consisted of nothing more than singing the same melody simultaneously at different levels in the scale; and the influence of the limited scope of the scale they had so far mapped out caused them to adopt intervals between the parts which sound very strange to modern ears; for the intervals chosen between the parts were either fifths or fourths and octaves, and in modern times until the beginning of the twentieth century the use of a succession of fifths

or bare fourths of even the most limited description has been looked upon as one of the most reprehensible of artistic misdeeds. But with the early composers for several centuries, even from the tenth to the fourteenth, it served as the basis for a very large measure of their procedure. For from the standard of elementary simplicity of melodies merely reduplicated at the fifth or the fourth the first enhancement which came naturally was to intersperse ornamental notes in the individual parts between one step of the reduplicated melody and another. It was only a transference to combined melodies of a practice which had been long in use in single part melodies, and it maintained the recognition of the principle of making voice parts in combination melodious, at the same time that it caused musicians to become familiar with the effect of other intervals besides fifths and fourths.

Another crude way of combining voices in parts was to sing two or more known melodies simultaneously; a process in which the principle of making voice parts melodious is recognized to the full, but the necessity of making the general effect harmonious seems to be inadequately provided for. It was in a sense a cutting of the Gordian knot, a shirking of the difficulties of the problem presented, and was naturally of little or no service to the development of artistic methods. A good deal of ingenuity was displayed in accommodating one tune to another by making modifications of detail, but the tunes employed maintained their character sufficiently to enable them to be recognized as good folk-songs or good melodious settings of Latin hymns. Composers were quite indifferent as to what tunes they

yoked together, and indeed seemed to prefer to combine a lively secular tune with a more solid tune having sacred Latin words. But such procedure did not lend itself to development, and this kind of experiment remained hopelessly crude from the first till it disappeared. However, it must be admitted that many vocal compositions, both sacred and secular, even so late as John Dunstable, Dufay, Caron, and others at the beginning of the fifteenth century, suggest a similar basis; as they evidently are developments of the rules which allowed the discanters to invent ornamental passages at will between the essential notes which were indicated by the *Cantus fermus* or Plainsong; which necessarily implies the assumption that men can sing whatever they can recognize melodically without regard to what their neighbours are doing. In reality the matter is not worth discussing, as every one knows that even totally unmusical people can sing any tunes that they know while other people are singing other tunes.

Parallels are found in the instrumental music in several parts of the Siamese and the Javese and the Moors and other oriental races, in which the various instruments play rhythmic or melodic formulas simultaneously without regard to the intervals in the relation of the parts; merely producing a strange hurly-burly of sounds which have no intrinsic connection except that the parts begin and end at the same time and generally on some combination which is concordant. A parallel is also found in some of the most recent programme music of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, in which the instruments severally play their individual parts without regard to euphony. But

in these cases there is at least the factor of thematic development which was entirely absent in the early Motets contrived on the basis of singing several different tunes together.

This type of music and its derivatives came to an end when composers addressed themselves to the development of what is called contrapuntal choral music. But here, again, the principle of giving the voices intelligibly melodious parts was as fully recognized. For the basis of the procedure was to take an existing tune in one voice part and to add other voice parts to it of an independent but also melodious character. But in this form of early art two things are noticeable which distinguish it from the earlier form of tunes sung simultaneously. The most careful attention was bestowed on the intervals which the added voices made with the voice singing the adopted tune, so that the effect should be euphonious and beautiful in itself; and the singers of each part were in a position to be aware of what the other parts were doing and conscious of their harmonious relations with them. And this introduced a new element into the problem. For as the earlier kind of part music represented a very low standard of mental development, it did not matter much what dissonances occurred or how they occurred; the singers of each part were only conscious of their own tune. But when singers began to expand their mental capacities and to feel the relation of what they sang to the context, and to be aware of the intervals it made with the parts others sang, the same consideration which had operated in successions of notes applied to the simultaneous incidence of notes. It was, if possible, more difficult

to sing, at the same time with some one else, a note the relation of which to a note sung by another singer was difficult to think, than it would have been to take the interval in a single melody. In the absence of mechanical aid in the shape of an instrument the singer could not take a note which stood in discordant relation to a note sung by another singer. The only means for introducing discords which appeared possible to the musicians whose minds were bent on making choral music was to provide concords first and then to allow one of the notes to be held on while another singer, moving by some familiar step, induced the desired discordant effect. From this arose one of the most familiar traits of the pure choral style. For as long as pure choral music lasted no discords ever appeared except mere passing notes and such as were achieved by one voice holding on to a note which was first taken as a concordant note while another voice moved to a position which made it discordant. And the tradition became so deeply rooted in the system that it persisted, with the exception of such dissonances as were most easily thought and least acute, for centuries after instrumental music came to be cultivated. And it is worth noting in this connection that the restriction to discords which are prepared became one of the characteristics of choral style.

In connection with the taking of a known tune and adding counterpoints it is well to remember that there was no idea of using the tune as a prominent feature, or allowing it to stand out from the rest of the parts in the manner in which the harmonized tune of a modern part-song does. This is illustrated by the fact that in a large majority of cases the assumed tune which serves for what was called the *Canto*



*fermo* was put into such long notes that, as a tune, it became unrecognizable. Indeed it was sometimes put into such long notes that the wonder is how the singer's breath could hold out. This was probably the continuance of a practice commonly found in the work of the earliest composers, such as those of the Parisian school of the twelfth century; who found writing even in three and four parts so extremely difficult that they relieved themselves by allowing one of the voices to hold single notes for a very long time. This entailed one of the voices only singing three or four different notes in the whole of a composition, and cases occur in which the singers have to hold a note for what would be equivalent to over fifty bars in modern music. Familiarity with this effect may have been the origin of composers of Josquin's time putting the *Canti fermi* into such singularly long notes; but as the art developed and composers gained greater facility in part-writing the practice was discontinued; and the *Canti fermi*, though they had more equal notes than the counterpoints, were not so conspicuously different from the other parts. A few exceptions are to be noted. For as composers grew more expert in the management of technique and developed a higher sense of artistic possibilities, they occasionally hit upon the idea of making the tune prominent, and manipulating it in such a manner as to minister to expression. Thus Obrecht in a secular choral song divides the tune between the tenors and the altos, giving a line to each alternately, and makes the other voices sing round them in passages of expressive counterpoint. Josquin also adopts a similar device in an exceptionally interesting and beautiful secular choral song, "Adieu mes Amours,"

in which the phrases of the principal tune are bandied about from voice to voice in a manner which is dimly suggestive of the much later methods of fugue. And it must not be overlooked that such practices became even more frequent in the latest times of pure choral music, especially when employed by German composers in writing choral works on chorales; the melodic formulas of which were most elaborately reiterated and interwoven by the various voices throughout the compositions. Moreover, the chorales or secular tunes which were sometimes used like *Canti fermi*, were at times so exactly maintained that though given to voice parts they could not help being conspicuous; and not a few of the finest folk-songs have been by this means preserved and have been extracted by searchers after such ancient tunes from the tenacious matrix of superincumbent counterpoint. But such procedure, especially in sacred music, was exceptional, the object of the composer being obviously to ignore the special tuneful qualities of the *Canto fermo* and to use it merely as a foundation upon which to build; and to produce a work of art upon artistic principles of which tunefulness was not a recognized component; thereby implying a recognition of the common humanity of the singers and not allowing the interest of the music to be centred more in one part than another.

A further consideration of great importance arises from the fact that voices are not adapted to rhythmic effects. For rhythm the means of producing the sound requires to have some capacity to give the effect of a blow, or to have a bite in the initiation of the sound. The effect of a shout (which approaches most nearly to the character of sound-production which lends itself to rhythmic effect) did not seem

to enter into the choral composers' conception of music. To their feeling melodic use of the voice was the prime consideration, and their method of dealing with the relations of the voice parts shows how acute their instinct was. Their constant aim was to obtain a rich effect by diversity of motion in the various parts. With this view they studied to make the voices move as much as possible at different moments and to make the crises of emphasis occur at different places. It was for the purpose of such effect that they developed the familiar devices of suspensions, syncopations, and cross accents, the highest perfection in such work being to attain the effect of an unrhythmic flow of sound by distributing the motion diversely in different parts; as by making some voices hold long notes while others moved in short ones. To this was added the rich effect of employing contrary motion in moving parts, and every device which should conduce to independence of the respective voices. But underlying it all the object proves to be to counteract the effect of simultaneous rhythm; and the result, in the most perfect examples of the style, is to present a net-work of complicated lines of melodic character all distinct and independent and yet combined into a harmonious whole. 11190

With the composers who had the highest instinct for style the passages are generally in conjunct motion, and they regarded the repetition of notes as almost out of the question. This at least is most characteristic of the greater Italian composers of the finest period, in whose work the feeling for sensuous beauty was much more highly developed than in composers of other nations. Palestrina afforded the most perfect examples of pure choral style. In his work

the development of many centuries is summed up ; and practically he stands almost alone in scope and uniform perfection of artistic resourcefulness. By his time the world of music was beginning to be influenced by new ideas. But he seems to have been untouched by them—and concentrating all his faculties upon the achievement of pure choral effect he attained the highest point which seems possible in this sphere of art. With him all is beauty of motion and tone ; expression of a passionate kind is never attempted. The music flows in crystalline and pellucid purity ; mysterious and subjective, the very ideal of purely devotional art. W 90

In his work, moreover, the instinct is presented in a unique degree for distributing the component notes of the chords resulting from the motion of the counter-point in such a way as to produce the most beautiful qualities of tone. It seems hardly necessary to point out that the quality of sound of any chord differs in a marked degree with the distribution of the notes composing it. In the most obvious sense the effect of a chord in which the component notes are close together in the upper parts and the lower notes are wide apart is quite different from the effect of the same chord when the lower notes are close together and the higher notes are wide apart—and this is complicated by the fact that the qualities of voices vary in their different registers—and a chord in which all the voices are in the highest parts of their scale has a different effect from the same chord when the notes are in a duller part of their scale. And, again, a composite effect is produced when some of the voices are in a telling part of their register and others in a part which is darker or less telling. The early contrapuntal

composers had been rather at the mercy of their counterpoint in such matters; for they found its manipulation so difficult that they had to be satisfied with such positions of the chords as their counterpoint led them to. Palestrina's mastery of technique was such as to enable him so to manipulate the motion of his various voices as to obtain whatever positions of the chords were necessary for the particular effects he wished to produce. It is not to be supposed that he always aimed at the positions producing the most purely beautiful sounds, for such procedure would tend to monotony. But he distributed the positions with due regard to variety, and with the instinct which enabled him to attain the most perfectly serene and beautiful effect when it was apposite. And in this he illustrates the superior instinct of the Italians of those times for purely sensuous beauty of sound, which was in strong contrast with the composers of other nations, whether Netherlanders or English. The Netherlanders, who had led the way up to a certain point in developing the art of choral music, had never been satisfied with ideals limited to such an extent by the claims of sensuous beauty. The contrast in music between the composers of the two races was like the contrast presented by their painters' work. The Netherlanders aimed at a different kind of beauty; and their devotion to it was always tinctured by an instinctive leaning towards things characteristic and strong. Even the Netherland composers of the earlier part of the sixteenth century seem much more inclined to disjunct motion in the voice parts than the Italian composers. They seem to have arrived earlier than the Italians at an inkling of the conception of a

chord as a mass of harmony irrespective of its aspect as the result of combinations of voice parts: and they also more frequently broke the flow of the counterpoint by repetition of notes. The effect of their work is not nearly so pure as that of the Italians, but it has energy, decisiveness, and greater possibilities of characterization. It is, in fact, much less subjective than the Italian choral music and moves away much sooner in the direction of secular style. The humorous and ingenious Lasso represents the Netherlands' attitude very comprehensively. At times he is dry and technical, but he can also be deeply impressive, with a character colder and severer than an Italian would have in a similar situation. At other times he seems possessed with a *diablerie* which is new and strange to the old choral style; but this of course is mainly in settings of secular words. It is remarkable that national traits, whether arising from habits or predispositions, show themselves even in a style which seems to admit of such slight degrees of variety as the old choral music. For it was not only the Netherlands who were distinguished from the Italians by a lesser disposition for pure beauty of effect, but the English composers also found their characteristic manner, and the Germans also theirs. The English choral music is more like the Netherland than the Italian in style, for it also is colder, and shows less aptitude for sensuous beauty of sound. It has a beauty of its own in its freshness and lightness, and its tendency to more emphasis and forcibleness. The Germans, again, when they began to show the spirit that was in them, produced music in the old choral style which had decided national idiosyncrasies. Their music sprang

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to life under the influence of the passionate feelings engendered by the Reformation, and bore fruit most successfully under Protestant conditions. In this the chorale at once began to play an important part; and this differentiated the result from the parallel Italian product, since the chorales differed from the Plainsong of the Roman Church in being essentially metric and therefore much more definite in character. Moreover, they represented such definite concrete realities to the German mind that they could not be suppressed and hidden by the accompanying counterpoints as were the much more indefinite *Canti fermi*. Indeed, when chorales were used as the inner thread of a contrapuntal choral work they not only maintained a metrical character themselves, but tended to infect the other parts and make them metrical also. So that the greater part of German sacred music of the sixteenth century is infused with a simply rhythmic character, which renders it less subjective than the Italian sacred music, and therefore more actively fervent as religious expression. And without breaking away from the essentials of style in choral music the music of German Protestantism implied the expression of the uprising of the spirit of man in the impulse to find a new field outside the domination of the Ancient Church, in consonance with the spirit of a more energetic and progressively intellectual people.

In the survey of the condition of art, where composers' aims were limited to developing the possibilities of pure choral music, it has been observed that the desirableness of melodic character in the parts allotted to the voices is universally emphasized; and that the voice parts were always contrived to

give the effect of independence in unity of mood. It was inevitable that the development of art should lead to the use of certain formulas in the shape of passages; and it was inevitable that these should be such as experience proved to be most convenient for voices to sing. Hence the subordinate passages are found to be almost universally in the form of runs and hardly ever in the form of arpeggios, which forms only came in with instrumental music and a new perception of the effect of chords; and the limitations of voices induced a very sparing use of discords, and of those only such as the ear was prepared for by hearing the discordant elements first in concord. The absence of rhythm and striking intervals precluded the musical ideas from being definite, and it followed from this and from the necessities of consecutive word-setting that there was very little thematic development in the old choral music. The scheme was undoubtedly limited, but it is evident from the enormous quantity of compositions produced by both Palestrina and Lasso, and the diversity of character in their works and in the works of composers of different nations, that considerable variety was possible without going beyond the bounds of the strictest purity of style. These bounds the early composers of choral music could not well exceed, because their whole attention was devoted to finding out by experience and observation what voices unaided by mechanical means could do, and what it was most apt for them to do; and their attention was not distracted by other forms of art, because no other forms of art as yet existed. It thus comes about that the question of style is more easily estimated in connection with the early choral



music than in any other branch of art, and it is worth while to devote some attention to it, because the comparative simplicity of the problem to be solved makes the principle of style more easy to discern.

No doubt the book is almost closed in the present day. The effect of the early choral works, especially the sacred works, is nearly always lost in a concert-room. They were devised for special surroundings, and now that people's taste, even in those surroundings, has changed so much, it is hardly possible to re-establish the conditions which enable the works to tell their story effectively any longer. They have their best chance with those who can read them to themselves and reconstruct in imagination the circumstances for which they were intended, and the frame of mind to which they were meant to appeal.

### III

#### SIMPLE TYPES OF INSTRUMENTAL STYLE

STYLE may be considered from as many hundreds of different points of view as there are causes or conditions which induce it. They interlace and intermingle without necessarily disturbing or confusing one another. Some are plain and easily distinguished, and some are hard to define; some are elementary, inevitable, persistent; some are elusive and resultant. Material causes, general causes, psychological, racial, and personal causes, associations and conditions of presentment, all influence and control its variations, of which any one with a glimmering of artistic or literary sense is conscious. It does not require much knowledge of art to tell from the style at what period a picture or a statue, or an engraving, or an enamel, or a piece of porcelain was produced; though within that circuit of style and under the general aspect of a period the essential qualities of the different branches of art are maintained. In the same way with music, the style of Vivaldi or Legrenzi or Cavalli is not mistaken as belonging to the age of Beethoven, nor the style of Lasso and Palestrina as belonging to the period of Hasse or Scarlatti. We should never take a work of Wagner or Brahms, however simple and innocent, for a product of the

age of Handel, nor a work of Purcell's for a product of the age of Mozart. Again, the styles which are genuinely characteristic of races are most unmistakable. The style of the temperamental, emotional Russian, the earnest and deeply feeling German, the gay and gesture-loving Frenchman, or the reticent and deliberate English folk, or the melodious Italian, or the fiery Czech—in every case the style is distinctive.

But it is mainly in primitive states of art that the simplest phases of style are found, and these afford the types most easy to understand. The development of the subtlest kinds of style, to which a great variety of different conditions minister, is only evolved by slow degrees as the methods of art become more various and more comprehensive. But the principles on which the different influences affect the result are always the same, and to understand the simplest types gives the clue to the meaning of the subtlest and most complicated phases.

It is clear enough that there are many forms of art in which the considerations are mainly of a single nature. The style of organ music depends upon the characteristics of the organ—tempered maybe by the circumstances, associations, and surroundings in which organs generally appear. The style of music for stringed instruments, or music for the lute, or music for any of the domestic keyed instruments, is the outcome of the capabilities and qualities of those instruments. These are all what may be called simple phases of style, in the sense that the styles are not complicated by different kinds of fitnesses. The combination of voice and accompaniment already entails a compound style

—because what is essentially fit for the voice is not essentially fit for an instrument, and each must adapt itself to the other if a satisfactory artistic result is to be arrived at. When we go further and face the style of a combination of choral music and solo music with orchestral accompaniment, as in oratorios and cantatas, the problem becomes very complicated indeed—and till recently we have had to be satisfied with very decided compromises. And when we come to opera we arrive at the most complicated assimilation of various styles imaginable. In the first place, the general style has to be modified to the conditions of the stage and to the histrionic character of the work. Then there is the style of solo vocal music, of choral music, of instrumental music, of the music of pageantry, and the music of domestic life, and there are the styles of all the instruments in the orchestra, each with little claims of its own; a variety which comprises even antagonistic elements, and so difficult that it may well have taken a good many centuries to solve—and does not seem to be solved to every one's satisfaction even yet.

If we observe the history of the development of differences of style, we find, through the advantages of centuries of experience, that the simple problems of style had to be solved first, and that the various combinations of style in the more complicated forms of art could only be achieved after the simple phases had been solved. This is illustrated by the early history of opera. For the men who began the development of modern music, not having the advantage of our experience, tried to solve the most complicated of all artistic problems first of all; and it is not surprising that their attempt broke down com-

pletely, and that they had to content themselves with a very much less ambitious programme.

In the end whatever composers aspired to do they had to submit to the inevitable. All they succeeded in doing in histrionic music for a century was to make some way in the simple problems of the style of vocal solo without being able to make any effectual use of the accompaniment so as to minister to enhancement of expression or effect. The composers of the seventeenth century mainly used the accompaniment as a support to the voice, and their figuration merely served to render it fairly artistic. Before they could approach to anything mature in respect of style they were driven to solve some of the problems of instrumental music, and to these, therefore, attention must first be given.

The earliest glimmerings of secular instrumental style did indeed vaguely overlap the great period of pure choral music, though the foremost composers scarcely troubled themselves with the thought of any other style till they had found out the best they could do with voices by themselves. Of course men were bound to dance, and women too, and they could not dance to polyphonic choral music, and they did soon find out that they danced with most enjoyment to the accompaniment of instruments. And so it came about that a certain rough standard of style was attained in dance music long before composers seriously attacked the problems of genuine secular music. But the better class of dance tunes were composed on the same principles of part-writing as choral music, and sometimes even in purely ecclesiastical modes. But though dance movements were quite successfully

devised in the old contrapuntal style, we cannot pretend that the true instrumental style of dance music, with its strongly marked rhythms and genuine instrumental treatment of subordinate details, was attained till hundreds of years later.

Lute music attained to definition and consistency very early, owing to its limitations. It is a conspicuous instance of the fact that a decisive and clearly marked style is attained more quickly where there are obvious incapacities than where the scope is great. The lute came to be a very popular domestic instrument in very early days; and composers were soon forced to develop an individual style because the instruments were incapable of playing the sort of music which had been cultivated up to the time when they came into use. The qualities of the lute were so conspicuously different from the qualities of the human voice, and indeed from those of any other instrument whatever, that it was quite impossible to aim at effects of a nature similar to vocal effects, or to treat music for the instrument in a contrapuntal or polyphonic style. It must be admitted that composers, overborne by custom, tried even to write fugues for the lute; but all such music was entirely alien to its genius. Choral fugues always depended on the sustaining power of the human voice for a good deal of their effect. But the lute had no sustaining power at all; it scarcely had more of it than the pizzicato of the violin; and lute composers, who generally were performers also, very soon found out that the most natural basis for music for their instrument was simple successions of chords, with notes in melody or figure which succeeded one another as rapidly as the plucking of the string by the finger allowed. As a matter

of fact they developed a very surprising technique, and we find rapid scale passages written by lutenists for their instruments which, now that the instrument has completely passed out of use, seem almost impossible. The rapid evanescence of the tone of the lute also induced a great cultivation of ornamental forms such as shakes and turns and glides and beats; and these ornamental formulas were the precursors and models of the ornaments which are met with, in such profusion, in the clavier music of Couperin and Rameau, and even of J. S. Bach. The point which is most noteworthy in connection with the lute is that its forcing composers to think of music in succession of chords was one of the most effectual ways in which they were brought to see harmony from a different point of view from that of the choral contrapuntists. And in this way the lute helped towards the first steps of the revolution to what was called the new music at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and an interesting point in connection with it was the fact that a famous lute-player, Vincentio Galilei, is recorded to have made the first attempts in those monodies or recitals for a single solo voice which led to the earliest attempts in recitative and the earliest experiments in opera and oratorio.

But when we pass from these rather premature developments, which soon arrived at something of a standstill, and begin to consider the development of the style of different branches of art, we find (as has to be so often repeated) that the problems of style were solved in the order of their obviousness. The earliest branch of instrumental art to arrive at maturity and the clear definition of a distinct style was organ

music ; not only because organs had been in existence so long, but because their limitations and powers were so clearly and decisively marked. The organ has something in common with the human voice, for the most essential characteristic which distinguishes it from all other instruments whatever is its power of sustaining tone. But it differs from the human voice conspicuously in that it can sustain tone inexhaustibly and without effort. The power of sustaining tone in the human voice and in all "wind" instruments is limited by the capacities of the human lungs. But an organ could go on sounding if a man chose to hold the key down till he was removed to his grave, and indeed could go on imperturbably after that if any one else came to hold it down in turn. Moreover, there is no difficulty in taking any combination of notes together on the organ as there is with voices. A man can take any handful he pleases, and as far as the organ is concerned no difficulties will be made about it. A man could sit on the keys, as legend says an organist of Magdalen College did in the middle of the second lesson, and the notes will all sound, without considering the effect upon the audience. This capacity of holding indefinitely any number and any combination of notes is the source of the organ's being the mightiest of all means for tremendous effects of harmony, and this quality is essentially the most important element in organ style.

A curious fact which illustrates the consequences of neglecting to observe the conditions of style is that the Italians, who started organ composition, and did well with it up to a certain point, entirely broke down and were left behindhand in the race,



mainly because their instinct lay rather in the direction of beauty of melody and clearness of form, which are not the most pronounced capacities of the organ; while the Germans, who came into the field late, distanced all other nations because their national impulses drew them so much more in the direction of expression by means of harmony and interest of texture. To look at the matter a little closer, we find that composers of organ music were helped at first by adapting the methods of choral music. They adapted the fugal form from that branch of art, and wrote for a long time in purely choral style—with long sustained notes, and very little by way of ornamental adornment. But one of the first things they found out was that they could not afford to neglect the greater power of the organ in driving home the effects producible by powerful discords.

Suspensions of all sorts tell much more through the uncompromising insistence of tone of the organ than by any other means, and the contrast between the powerful discord and the concord by which it is relieved is much greater, because the fundamentals of the organ have fewer overtones and clashing harmonics than any other instrument. When massive and sustained discords are given on a pianoforte they always suggest organ effects, and we interpret them rather by association than by actual impression. The capacity of sustaining sounds is therefore the most conspicuous element in the determination of the style of organ music. But the character of its sustainment has its limitations. It is intractable and incapable of the gradations which can be produced by the human voice. It is impossible to get an expressive

crescendo or diminuendo in one part apart from the rest. The organ will not vibrate with sentiment. It will not lend itself to human passion or to dramatic accent. It is incapable of the vibrato of the impassioned singer or violinist, and equally incapable of portamento. Its notes are decisive, clear, and indubitable—and it is with such facts that style-builders are concerned. The style of any instrument is not arrived at by trying to make it do or simulate what some other instrument would do better, but by making the utmost of its actual physical characteristics. As the notes of the organ are so decisive, clear, and persistent, the style of music for it, which is capable of the highest possibilities, must be such as makes use of these qualities. Composers found this out very early, and made what seem to us pathetically childish attempts to combine brilliancy with substantial chords in accordance with the evident idiosyncrasies of the instrument. There is a whole branch of art cultivated assiduously by the greatest composers for about fifty years, from 1575 to 1625, which consists of apparently aimless and almost idiotic successions of scales supported by simple harmonies. The form even spread to the harpsichord, and was fondly cultivated in this country at the greatest period in her musical history by such great and wise masters as Byrd and Gibbons—and, of course, by the wildly whirling John Bull. The simplest absurdities are naturally to be found in the earliest days, as in examples by the father of modern organ music, Andrea Gabrieli. Composers soon found that totally aimless excursions in scale passages did not suffice to satisfy the conditions of art, and began to devise figures of more appreciable consistency

and to put their scale passages into some kind of orderly form.

In the development of texture two things had very great influence. The first of these was obviously\* the influence of the traditional choral style. In some ways the organ was just as well fitted as voices for certain kinds of polyphonic effects. All types of fugal form are particularly congenial to it because of the extreme clearness and persistency of the tone, while what are called harmonic forms are not so congenial. Passages founded on chords, like arpeggios, are less telling than passages founded on the scale; and the motion of parts in an immense quantity of slow organ music is mainly in what is called conjunct motion. But in more rapid passages and more energetic and rhythmic forms of art a different influence is surprisingly perceptible. Indeed there is something almost comical in that mighty and independent character the royal organ having its style so much influenced by the necessities of the two boots of average humanity. Yet so it is! The impulse to find forms of passages which are convenient to play on the pedals has profoundly affected the whole texture of organ music. The process is quite logical. If in lively fugues the pedals had to take their turn it was necessary to find forms of rapid passages which could be played by the feet alternately. This influence did not begin to assert itself strongly, of course, till the technique of pedal-playing began to develop. Therefore we do not find it so prominently in Frescobaldi, Luzzaschi, Lohet, Cornet, or Phillips as in their successors. It is perceptible in Froberger, more prominent still in Pachelbel, omnipresent in Buxtehude, and actually expands

beyond the limits of organ music into the domain of choral music when we get to J. S. Bach. In one sense the formulas of pedal technique follow in a singularly natural order from the basis of the choral style. For a great number of such formulas are the natural outcome of the attempt to floridize or ornament the simple foundations of conjunct slow passages like voice parts; which perhaps explains the bewildering fact that we find passages of pedal type in organ music before pedals came into universal use, as in Frescobaldi's fugue subjects. And that point needs to be kept in mind in estimating the growth of independent organ style. The roots of organ music run deeper than those of any other branch of instrumental art, and the organ may be acknowledged to have an advantage both in its initiatives and in its qualities—as we may see when we come to the violin—the music for which was the next to attain to maturity of style.

From the organ to the violin is indeed a huge leap, from the grandest and biggest to one of the littlest. The whole artistic meaning of the two instruments is as distant as the poles. The organ makes its effect mainly by overwhelming force—by sheer concrete facts of impression. Delicacies, subtleties, gradations, artistic finesse are out of place with it. But with the violin it is absolutely the reverse. The violin, with a comparatively small tone, is all-powerful by reason of its wonderful scope of artistic delicacies. It is infinitely capable of purely melodic effects, capable of vibrating with passion, of interpreting human emotion of all sorts in a degree which is not approached by any other instrument whatever. Its powers of sustaining tone are much like those of the human voice, and it is as

capable of subtle gradation and variety of tone colour—and together with that it is almost the most agile of all instruments, and capable of almost an infinite variety of figure. If the organ is the king of instruments, the violin is the queen. The organ has the practical businesslike qualities of the active man of affairs, and the violin has all the subtlest and the most exquisite qualities of the woman. She ravishes our souls with the mere beauty of her tone; and it is not by concrete force that she compels us, but by the fineness of the artistic texture of what she can do. She does not deal in harmony like the organ. Harmony is almost denied to her except of course in combination with others—that is a different story. We are thinking now of the violin by herself, or, at most, in the combination of simple soli with accompaniment. There is thus hardly any point of view in which the violin is not materially distinct from the organ. But nevertheless at first composers tried to write in the same style as organ music—that is, they tried to write imitations of choral forms. But they soon found that such imitations were inadequate, and it is really rather surprising how soon they found their way to a distinctive instrumental style. Even Giovanni Gabrieli, quite at the beginning of the seventeenth century, shows some inklings of it, and so does his contemporary Banchieri. In less than fifty years composer-performers bustled about with their scales and flourishes with remarkable agility and presented passages which are very pointedly distinct from choral style. What seems strange at first is that they did not apply their minds to melodic effects or expression. The side of violin technique to which they mainly applied themselves

was the animated, brilliant, lively side. This was probably owing to the imperfections of their bows. They did not indeed begin to find out the value of the pliant elastic bow till some way on into the eighteenth century. Even Corelli must have had rather a stiff one—and probably the deeply expressive powers of the violin were almost unknown and lay dormant for more than a hundred years after it found its way into artistic circles. However, towards the end of the seventeenth century slow movements began to take on characteristic qualities of amenity and tenderness—there is quite a characteristic class of simple slow movements by Vitali, Bassani, Corelli, and Vivaldi—and when we come to their successors, Tartini, Geminiani, and Locatelli, we find that the melodic side of the violin's capacities is fully recognized. The bow became more pliable and more serviceable for a variety of effects in Tartini's form, and we may say that the style of violin music then became completely distinctive, and was thus permanently differentiated from the style of other branches of art.

J. S. Bach's contribution to violin style was very strange and interesting. His own development was so saturated with organ style that when he addressed himself to writing for the violin, especially for the violin by itself, he was irresistibly impelled to endeavour to express himself in terms of the organ style, and to introduce such big effects of suspensions and harmonies as were most congenial to him, but not in truth really congenial to the violin. It is very near being a confusion of styles. But his highly susceptible nature could not go so far astray as to write for the violin passages so far purely organic as to be entirely inapt for the violin. And

in the end he mainly transmuted ideas which had the spacious nature of organ music into terms which enlarged the range of what was possible for the violin, and made his music so inevitable to be mastered by great players that the violin style expanded to possibilities unthought of by composers who felt their music mainly in terms which approved themselves to their instincts as performers. It is not to be wondered at that Bach's compositions for violin alone are among the most unique in their own sphere in the whole range of art.

In later times there has been a singular competition between two tendencies. The violin being essentially the finest instrument in existence for actual purposes of musical expression, composers who were genuinely and innately musical and gifted with absolutely sincere motives have always been endeavouring to expand its capacities in the direction of such expression; as, for instance, Beethoven in his latest compositions and Johannes Brahms almost throughout his career. This in reality is a continuance of Bach's line of action, which was obviously away from such things as the instrument can most easily do towards those things which it can do and which are fairly within the limits of its style, but yet are such as the mere efficient fiddler does not want to trouble himself to do.

On the other hand, that type of performer, being almost as much of a soloist as a singer, develops the taste for the applause of the multitude. In other words, he gets the irrepressible craving to hear the burst of sympathetic thunder when he comes to the end of his efforts. He finds he does not get it by struggling with the technical difficulties of the great

masters of his art, for the undeveloped thousands cannot understand what he is doing! But he does get the uproar his soul thirsts for if he gives a dazzling display of mere obvious tricks which have no musical significance whatever. Under such influence the technique of the violin has expanded in a marvellous fashion. All the futilities of pizzicatos mixed up with bow passages and the devices to produce the effect of gas jets out of order and such ineptitudes have been explored to the utmost possible, and those who perform them live in the constant roar of world-wide applause.

It is permissible to laugh in a friendly spirit when a violinist who is capable of higher things shows to the public (with a sort of childish pride) that he can do the most astonishing conjuring tricks. But there often comes a Nemesis. If a man sets too much store on playing the mountebank he sometimes arrives at not being able to do anything else. And there cannot be any doubt that so doing has the tendency to deprave men's minds. Otherwise an instrument which is almost sacred through its capacities for exquisite expression would not be degraded in public to serve as a means to present some of the most repulsive and idiotic aberrations which are to be found in the whole range of music.

Yet these antics are quite within the limits of style! They are necessarily even too perfectly adapted to the violin's physical limitations, and to the limited intelligence of the human type for whose amusement they are devised.

The moral is that it is obviously futile to lay exclusive stress on one only of the thousand features and constituents of art, even when it is so obviously



important as style; and that perfect adaptation of means to the conditions of presentment, in other words, full acceptance of the influence of the audience, may produce very bad art. The vast enhancement of technique when it is not accompanied by a coincident growth of understanding only serves to accentuate the need of enlightenment. The compensation lies in the fact that the world gets tired of antics, and retains its appreciation of sincerities; so in the end the work of the worthiest gets the worthiest heed.

## IV

### STYLE IN MUSIC FOR THE DOMESTIC KEYED INSTRUMENTS

THE familiar family of clavichords, harpsichords or spinets, and pianofortes are clearly distinguished from organs, violins, and voices by certain decisive limitations, which exerted a very powerful influence in the evolution of the style of music written for them. The clearest apprehension of these limiting influences may be obtained by comparing the characteristics of these instruments with those of the organ. In certain points indeed they resemble each other; since in both there is certainty and clearness of intonation, and power of executing rapid passages; and also facility for presenting passages in many parts by a single performer. The modern domestic keyed instruments have one great advantage in their extreme elasticity in accent and variation of tone in detail, which makes them much more fitted for rhythmic effects for which the organ is notably deficient; and these qualities make them also much better suited for the rendering of melody with subordinate accompaniment, such as is found in Mozart's sonatas, Mendelssohn's songs without words, Schumann's familiar lyrical pieces, Chopin's

nocturnes, and many delicate trifles by Grieg. For, though it is quite easy to render melody with subordinate accompaniment on the organ, the obviousness of the mechanical device employed detracts from its distinction, and, except in rare cases, makes it appear rather a second-rate phase of style—which is partially emphasized by the incapacity of the organ to produce expressive effects by subtle variation of amount of tone. But in other conspicuous directions the organ possesses decisive advantages. For while the most obvious quality which determines organ style is its power of sustaining tone without a shadow of variation, and without limit, thereby uniting the mighty effects of sustained chords and of suspensions heaped upon one another, the domestic keyed instruments are so deficient in that respect that never, for the hundredth part of a second, can they maintain the same amount of tone for any given note, undiminished. The sound begins to disappear the moment the string has been struck. So it is that with the pianoforte and its primitive antecessors, as is also the case with the lute, disabilities count almost more than capacities in determining the style. The characteristics of the organ are more positive, and composers think mainly of what kind of procedure will conduce most to their effectual employment. But with the domestic keyed instruments men think less of what they can do than of what they cannot do. The basis of organ style seems to lie in what it has, that of the pianoforte and its kin in what they have not. So, while the composer for the organ who has the true instinct of style thinks of making use of its great power of sustaining tone, its immense range of degrees of power from the softest and most

distantly audible sound to the most mighty roar a human being can endure, without corresponding effort on the part of the performer, the composer for the pianoforte has to devise means for covering up its deficiencies in those directions. But these deficiencies are not without their compensations. For a significant fact must be emphasized that the strongest and most decisive contrast between the organ and the pianoforte lies in the difference between what may be called their energizing powers; the energizing power of the organ lying, as in vocal music, mainly in suspensions which drive the music onwards through the mental need for resolution of discord, and that of the pianoforte in the more secular province of rhythm which suggests bodily activities, and even frequently induces them. This deep-set difference probably accounts for the universally recognized appropriateness of the organ in sacred music and the equal unfitness of the pianoforte in such conditions. Indeed, when the latter instrument is used in sacred edifices in the performance of sacred music, the instinct for style protests so vehemently against its aggressive secularity that it is usual to try and make believe that it is quite innocent of association with the levities it is made to perform in the concert-room. As illustrating some of the very subtlest phases of style this curious situation might be very serviceably dwelt upon, but at present it would obviously distract too much from the consideration of the influence of deficiencies upon style.

It follows from the constitution of the domestic keyed instruments that as a note once taken cannot increase in tone but must immediately decrease, means must be found to suggest more than is actually

transmitted to the ear by inviting the mind to infer proceedings and progressions of which the instrument is practically incapable. And this inevitably leads again to another parenthetical observation: that where any particular style is determined by disabilities a great deal of its charm depends on the subtle compromises, compensations, and other devices which provide for the presentment of equivalents to disguise these disabilities; and that when it is proposed to obviate them by artificial means it is always overlooked that the charm and appositeness of a perfectly and subtly thought-out style would be stultified. The works would require to be translated as if into a foreign tongue in order to adapt the subtleties of style to the improved instrument.

This inevitably further invites the mind towards consideration of the question of arrangements, whereby works which are written for some special conditions of performance are attempted to be refitted for presentation under other conditions. From the highest ideal point of view such arrangements are impossible, for the more perfect the style of the original the more futile is the "Arrangement." And it is only recognizable as a compromise in the form of a translation, wherein, as in the translation of a poem from one language to another, many of the subtlest strokes of the poet in his use of the characteristic beauties of his language must inevitably be sacrificed—even with the highest genius for finding equivalents.

But the recognition of deficiencies need not necessarily imply disparagement. Human beings with deficiencies and inequalities of character often become the more subtly interesting. When the diffi-

culties are surmounted something of a special kind may be got out of them which could not be got out of simpler conditions. So with the pianoforte, it has to be recognized that when treated crudely it is one of the most objectionable instruments ever invented; when treated with finesse and discrimination it is capable of discoursing the most eloquent music. When treated with a lack of style, for the enunciation of kinds of art which are not truly adaptable to it, it is one of the greatest disseminators of vulgarity and the most potent depraver of human taste conceivable; when treated with artistic insight it may prove a most persuasive interpreter of the highest and purest phases of art.

But in order to see in what way many successive generations of composers strove to get into touch with obvious facts, it is necessary to go a long way back and trace with what childlike innocence and simplicity they came to realize that as their instruments could not sustain tone it was necessary to use rapid notes and to devise rapid passages to stand in the place of the simple harmonies and such sustained effects as were suitable to voices, organs, or stringed instruments. The composers for the harpsichord (by whom the foundations of the style of modern pianoforte music began to be laid) did not have to begin quite at the bottom. For, as has been pointed out, their instruments had been preceded by others of which the tone was quite as evanescent, such as the lutes and harps and lyres and other ancient instruments which were sounded with some kind of pluck. And in these spheres of activity some of the more elementary problems of ornamentation and passage-making had been solved; and these were

happily transferred to the sphere of music for keyed instruments.

But, on the other hand, confusion was entailed by the inability of composers to keep their minds free from the influences of other forms of art which had been devised for voices and other types of instrument. Such confusion invariably arises in connection with the development of all new forms of art. Parallels are amply supplied in the ordinary affairs of life. When railways first came in the carriages were made in imitation of stage coaches, with many of the traditional ornaments representing paraphernalia which could not possibly be required in railways. So with the electric light. When it first came into use people had to adopt the forms and types of decoration which had been evolved for candles; including even the rim or collar which was the artistic presentation of the device for catching the guttering wax; and we sometimes even see such absurd confusion in the sense of style as an electric light stuck in the end of a sham candle made of china or glass.

In the earliest phases of music for the domestic keyed instruments analogous confusion of mind or lack of clearness of discernment is shown in some extremely quaint aberrations. It is necessary to recall that the most typical form of ancient choral music was the employment of a *Canto fermo* or ancient piece of Plainsong for one of the voices, and the addition of as many other parts as were required in the form of counterpoint, which were in point of fact somewhat vague and indefinite melodies. Composers for the keyed instruments who aimed at a high standard of serious artistic interest, through lack of other models, took this type of procedure and adapted it to their

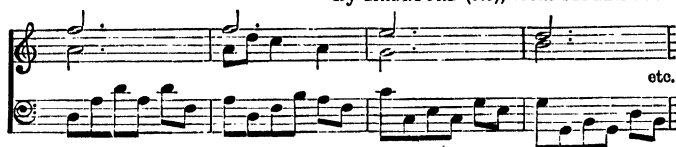
instruments, though it was utterly inappropriate for an instrument which could not sustain tone, and therefore could not supply the counterpart of the long notes of the inner *Canti fermi*. Composers for the cembalo had to adopt what was available in the matter of procedure and go on solving their problems one at a time, just as men solve their social problems in later days. But even in such things they unconsciously paid tribute to the inevitable, and recognized at once the idiosyncrasies of their instruments by contriving much more rapid passages for their counterpoints than they would have used if they had been writing for voices. In the conventional vocal counterpoint musicians recognize only three ratios: the first, that in which the part or parts added are of equal duration to those of the *Canto fermo*; the second, that in which the part concerned has two notes for one; the third, that in which it has four notes to one. The fourth and fifth species do not introduce quicker notes but merely different ways of distributing long and short notes. This is as much as is wanted for voices. But in some of the earliest discoverable music of this kind which is written for the domestic keyed instruments increase of the number of quick notes is found, and they are presented in new and suggestive forms. In the interesting MSS. called "Mulliner's Collection" of about 1566 are found several pieces in the form of *Canto fermo* and added counterpoints; such as one by John Redford on the Plainsong "Te per orbem terrarum," in which, though a great part of it is in the conjunct motion which was the direct inheritance of instrumental from choral art, there are two very significant passages in which the composer, even at



this early date, momentarily came into touch with the type of arpeggio formulas which were so alien to the style of choral art, but became later a distinguishing trait of instrumental style. It will be observed

#### TE PER ORBEM TERRARUM

By REDDFORD (*sic*), from MULLINER.

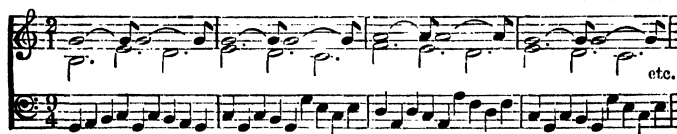


also, as a subtle trait of style, that the forms of arpeggio figures are dictated by the shape of the human hand and the convenience of the fingers.

Further, in this book of Mulliner's there are examples which show the instinct of composers to break the bonds of the old choral style and to seek for intimately ingenious devices which might be qualified to represent a new kind of art. A very curious and amusing example is an elaborate speculative combination of species by Shelbye. The *Canto fermo* (a Miserere) is given to the little finger in

#### MISERERE

SHELBYE.



what appears to be two semibreves in a bar, though it requires the addition of a quaver to each semibreve to make it fit, the middle part for the thumb and contiguous fingers of the right hand and the part for the left hand are in a time equivalent to nine crotchets in a bar. Such devices are met

with also in later Elizabethan compositions for the "virginals." They serve to illustrate the ineffectualness of abstract speculations which try to dispense with the slow processes of applying the actual, and building by realized experience. In such experiments composers beat their wings fruitlessly against the confines of their cage. The outlet was not in that direction. The process of evolution was necessarily limited to matters of phraseology till the foundations were widened and solidified. The forms of modern instrumental art did not begin to grow till composers had achieved independence from the diction they had inherited from choral forms of art. Till the part-writing of instrumental works had been transformed into totally new aspects, and arrived at passages which voices could not have sung and which could only be adequately presented by the instruments for which the music was written, the larger aspects of design could not be fruitfully attended to.

If the lines of development are carefully traced it will be found that there are two types of procedure which took shape by degrees; one was to represent long notes by shakes and ornaments round about the essential long notes, and even by rapidly reiterated notes (such as are still remembered by some people in the once popular tune of the "Corsican Brothers"), of which there are some examples in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean virginal books.

JOHN BULL, from the Variations on  
"As I went to Walsingham."



The other, even more important, is the development of the type of formulas representing chords, inducing the change from simple conjunct motion, like that of choral music, to formulas such as arpeggios and figures based on arpeggios ; which provide for the representation of harmonies in the manner most apt to instruments which have no sustaining power. Among the later Elizabethans the composer who had the instinct of adaptability which ministers to the ends of style to quite an inordinate degree was Dr. John Bull, author of the passage given above ; who has become quite a standing joke in musical history for the ingenuity with which he developed technical feats in the shape of runs in thirds and sixths, and artificial ingenuities in combinations of two or three different rhythms or tempi going on at once, like the example of Shelly described above. But the phase of his technical ingenuity which marked most conspicuously his sense of style has generally been overlooked ; for it is in anticipation of modern types of rapid passages in arpeggios and formulas founded upon them that he was really most conspicuously ahead of his time and indicated the direction in which the diction of music for the domestic keyed instruments was destined to evolve. We find in his works not only plentiful arpeggios, representing successions of harmonies, but even broken octaves, such as are frequently met with in music of the earlier classical sonata period, and in studies written to facilitate their mastery by Clementi. Dr. John Bull also had an imitator and probably a great admirer in the person of one Benjamin Cosyn, who made a grand collection of virginal music, which contains many compositions by Dr. John Bull and also by himself ; in which the

most conspicuous features are anticipations of the familiar arpeggio formulas of modern music, and even such advanced ideas as arpeggios distributed between the two hands to enhance the brilliancy of effect and make the simple rhythms more decisive.

## GALLIARD

BENJAMIN COSYN.



BENJAMIN COSYN.

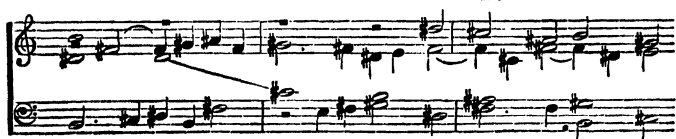


It is noticeable that the composers who had the greatest depth of feeling and the noblest standard of ideas, such as Byrd and Orlando Gibbons, did not attempt anything in this style. They contented themselves mainly with modifying the procedure of the current type of choral music, and developing the polyphonic possibilities of movements written in the old dance forms, such as pavans and galliards, and making them rich and interesting in texture with passages mainly in conjunct motion. It brings to mind the situation which so often presents itself, that those who have least to say seem often to have the greater capacity for presenting it in a superficially effective manner; while those who have the deepest thoughts and the most earnest minds seem to have difficulty in expressing themselves at all. Thought and showiness of any kind are antagonistic. The

men who have deep thoughts and feelings are too respectful of them to deck them out with superfluity of adornment; while those whose minds are set on mere showiness naturally exert themselves most in display. Yet they could not have such a taste for mere display if they had finer and more thoughtful natures. But even so different types of minds serve for different purposes. Those whose passion for style is so excessive that they expend most of their energies upon it astonish their contemporaries; but on maturer acquaintance they prove to have nothing much to say. Yet it would be hard upon them to deny that their dexterities served very materially in the development of technique, which could afterwards be applied by more serious composers to fine purpose. And it may be added that even Dr. John Bull, when not so exclusively bent on astonishing the indiscriminating, wrote very interesting and attractive music.

It may also be added to his credit that he discerned the great possibilities of modulation in instrumental music; and, recklessly daring, got through a complete circuit of keys in a single movement, even anticipating one of the much vaunted discoveries of the twentieth century in a series of modulations based on a scale of whole tones, in a surprising composition in the ancient and suggestive form known as that of the "Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La." (See Chaps. XII. and XV.) The following is an illustration of the modulatory ventures which occur in this work:—

BULL'S Modulations.





Of the great importance of such a speculative attitude in connection with modulation as a phase of instrumental music it is hard to speak too highly. In the finest type of the old choral music it had been almost non-existent, and what there was was limited both by the principles of tuning and by the traditional views about the purposes of sharps and flats. In pure choral music, before instrumental music came to its assistance, extraneous modulations were very perilous adventures. Even in modern times, with all the support instruments can give, they often betray the performers into regions where they hardly recognize themselves; and to people who have the highest instinct for style they always ring somewhat false. But in instrumental music there is no bar of a practical kind. If the composer can produce adequate reasons for modulating in any direction whatever, there is nothing to stop him but the limitations of his technique. But it is a law of style that when there are resources which will enhance the effect of what has to be conveyed, they must ultimately be used and become part and parcel of the style; because men who have their artistic message to convey will not forgo any means to make it as interesting and attractive as possible. Hence, in the evolution of instrumental style in general, modulation has by slow degrees become more and more important, both in connection with design (which in modern music is based on relations of keys) and as a means of expression and characterization

of very subtle kinds. In these connections subtle modulation, even in the actual subjects themselves, is one of the very latest phases of development, especially in music dramas in which (inasmuch as they combine elaborate instrumental accompaniments with their other various components) the aspects and properties of instrumental style are proportionately presented. Dr. John Bull's enterprises in this line are therefore of very great importance and even more striking as evidences of his remarkable instinct for style than his treatment of arpeggio passages and figures. It is as though he gripped the whole situation of instrumental music with complete insight, and boldly and uncompromisingly presented the true solution of the problems of style as far as the developments of technique then allowed.

His adventurous experiments stand out all the more prominently because after his time the main stream of art flowed into other channels, and no one among composers of high mark followed his lead. After the wonderful outburst of music for domestic keyed instruments which characterized the later years of Elizabeth's reign and the early part of that of James I., this branch of art ceased to be much cultivated. It was not till great part of the seventeenth century had run by that it was taken up again with any profitable degree of energy, and by that time great changes had come over the art which affected instrumental music as well as other branches. The Italians had been busy developing the earlier phases of operatic music, and a great deal had been done in establishing principles of harmonic style and form as distinguished from the contrapuntal forms and procedures; while organ music had been culti-

vated to a very high pitch of perfection by musicians of various nations, such as Frescobaldi in Rome, Sweelinck in Holland, and Scheidt in Germany in the earlier period, and by Muffat, Froberger, Pachelbel, and Buxtehude later. Then in the latter part of the century music for the "cembalo" came to be cultivated again under changed conditions. Serious men like Froberger still clung to the dignified style associated with the organ. His Suites, for instance, which prefigure those of J. S. Bach in style and feeling, bear strong traces of organ style, in the strength of suspensions and massive sequences of fine harmonies. But these are generally presented in terms of rapid passages, which imply that Froberger also was not blind to the inevitable limitations of the instrument. A specially remarkable proof of his divination of what was appropriate to it is the movement which stands at the head of his suite in C, called "A Lament for Ferdinand King of the Romans," in which he frequently spreads out his chords in slow arpeggios, sometimes accenting special notes to make the effect more interesting, while his impassioned melody is broken up into instrumental recitative in a form which enables the capacities of the instrument for elocution to come into full play.

But yet, again, a familiar situation is repeated, for it lay with a composer of far less decisiveness of character and sincerity of purpose to lead the way towards more modern artistic diction. Johann Pachelbel had something of the same artistic disposition as Dr. John Bull, and a rather abnormal sense of style. Of all the northern German organists he had the most ample experience of Italian harmonic methods; and this led him, in writing for the



cembalo, to attempt most frequently to represent simple successions of chords by formulas and figures of the nature of arpeggios. Thus in his collection of variations called the *Hexachordum Apollinis* (of 1699) and in his Chaconnes there are many variations which are entirely founded on figures representing successions of chords of a perfectly modern kind. In this respect they resemble the least interesting of Mozart's variations for cembalo. Here, again, is an instance of a composer whose thoughts are in themselves comparatively insignificant, but who really did the art considerable service by his persistency in cultivating the diction which ultimately supplied the necessary formulas of subordinate details in the works for keyed instruments of the classical sonata period, and even some of the phraseology of the fanciful Schubert himself. He even attained the questionable distinction of using a baneful formula which is always attributed to one Alberti, a fashionable composer who lived long after him. However, Pachelbel, again, was somewhat isolated; for, as is well known, all the finest and most permanently interesting cembalo music of the time immediately succeeding him, such as Kuhnau's suites and sonatas, and the clavier music of Bach and Handel, was written for the most part in the free contrapuntal style in which conjunct movement predominates; though Handel in his most superficial moments (as, for instance, in his Chaconnes and Passacaglia) frequently makes use of complacent formulas similar to Pachelbel's.

But there was one composer whose dainty fancy accommodated itself at times to the true style of music for the domestic keyed instrument. Couperin, whose suites (by him called *Ordres*) are among the

most important and the most permanently charming of the earlier clavier music, left a great many movements which are completely illustrative of the type of diction derived from the figuration of chords as distinguished from instrumental counterpoint. At the same time it is interesting to observe that he rarely used such devices as formulas of accompaniment, such as are found so profusely in the early Italian clavier music which was made for the easy-going amateurs of the higher classes, and even in the less important works of Haydn and Mozart; but he made the figures akin to arpeggios serve as part of the actual material of his ideas.

All these early stylists were, however, summed up and surpassed by the astonishing personality of Domenico Scarlatti. Being the son of the greatest of the early Italian opera composers, Alessandro Scarlatti, he was deeply imbued with the harmonic principles which prevailed in Italian art; though he applied them in a manner which was somewhat alien to the Italian mind, which had no great liking for the harpsichord as a solo instrument in those days, possibly on account of its not lending itself readily to the interpretation of melody. Domenico had, among many astonishing gifts, almost the acutest sense of style ever possessed by a composer. He was a great performer himself, and devoted his powers mainly to the exploration of the capacities of the instrument on which he performed, and was little likely to stultify his performances by writing passages which were unsuited to it. He felt its possibilities as well as its limitations; and his mind seemed to leap with something unusually like inspiration to all the types of idea which would lend themselves

most perfectly to being expressed by an instrument that could sparkle and ripple, and astonish with rapidity and accent and rhythm, but could not do anything with passages requiring a power of sustaining tone. With him we find a notable exception to the common rule that men with great sense of style have but little to say, and that little poor in quality; for his musical personality remains permanently interesting, and probably will remain so as long as music for the domestic keyed instruments is cultivated.

But while paying ample tribute to his peculiar genius, we must admit that the great majority of his works never exceed the slender outfit of two parts at a time except here and there. In one sense this emphasizes the truth of his instinct for style; as it shows how much ground can be covered by the right usage of arpeggios and figures, and how thoroughly he avoided any temptation to mar his style by such inapt procedures as big and massive chords. But his limitations in this respect were also owing to the fact that men had not yet found out how to use the formulas of instrumental music in the massive combinations of figures and harmonies which were so impressive in later instrumental music. In this the comprehensive genius of J. S. Bach immensely surpassed him. With all respect it must be admitted that Scarlatti in the main hits the ideal of such a limited style more exactly than his greater contemporary. But when it comes to the utterance of great things, as in the *Chromatische Fantasie* and some of the preludes in the *Wohltemperirte Clavier*, Bach covers much more ground than ever could be possible for Scarlatti. The *Fantasie* is, indeed, one of the very finest examples, if not quite

the finest, of that perfect adaptation of splendid means to great ends which is the highest ideal of style. The whirling passages of rapid notes, the wide spread of arpeggios representing noble successions of harmony, the rhythmic force, the vivacity of accent, the elocutionary treatment of instrumental recitative, the amazingly bold modulations, are all presented in the terms ideally suited to the capacities of an instrument which, through the insight and genius of the composers writing for it, actually gains by its very deficiencies.

Scarlatti's so-called sonatas and the last-mentioned work of J. S. Bach may fairly be taken as summing up the first stage in the evolution of the style of the domestic keyed instruments. They mark the important point where the principles and the lines on which future developments would inevitably proceed are established. When the pianoforte superseded its more interesting and even more limited predecessors, its novel qualities reacted upon the further enhancement of style. Its greater power of tone made it possible to assimilate in the direction of organ effects and of greater masses of tone in chords with more notes in them than the human fingers can strike simultaneously. Its greater rhythmic power and its greater facility in repeating staccato notes brought about quite a new sphere of technique; while the pedal, by blurring articulation and throwing a mysterious veil over changing harmonies, lent itself to an excitement of the sensibilities which, though alien to the people of Handel and Bach's time, is peculiarly congenial to those whose susceptibility is capable of verging on ecstatic intoxication—a state consistent with the general tendency of art under the excess of the romantic ideals.

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## V

### ELEMENTARY COMPLICATIONS OF STYLE

THE manner in which such physical facts as the great sustaining power of the organ, the extreme elasticity of the violin, and the rapid evanescence of tone of the lute and harpsichord and pianoforte affect style is very easily grasped. It is the same with all other kinds and branches of art. The qualities of the materials used in sculpture, in all kinds of metal work, in architecture, and even more subtly in all kinds of painting, serve as the primary bases of style in those ranges of artistic expression. The elementary groundwork of style in such respects seems so absurdly obvious as to make it almost tiresome to discuss it, were it not that the most obvious things are often overlooked and forgotten unless definitely formulated and emphasized. That they are often forgotten and ignored even by people who profess to be efficient contrivers of works of art is also obvious, as is the fact that people are easily beguiled into putting up with and even believing they admire a vast amount of grossly shallow and stupid commercial work which violates the simplest principles of honesty in style.

But in extenuation it may be pointed out that such elementary bases of style, which are no more than common-sense interpretation of physical laws, become obscured when other powerful influences are brought to bear; and that they are not only liable to mislead and confuse the judgment, but actually to make compromises inevitable and occasionally to entail direct violation and suppression of essential principles. Such compromises are entailed in music even in so simple a composite style as that induced by devising a work for a combination of instruments of diverse physical characters and even for such a simple combination as voices and instrumental accompaniment; though it has taken men almost till the twentieth century clearly to realize that elementary fact. As with everything that lives or moves, there has to be some "give and take" on all sides; and the difficulty in advancing art is to find just how much "give and take" should be allowed, and where. The persistence of decisive characteristics must be accommodated by concessions in the range of artistic expression which is more or less neutral or common ground.

As long as music was written for voices alone or for single instruments at a time, the physical principles which controlled the style had almost untrammelled play. There were no serious complications, and the operating influences were easy to follow. To all appearances the conditions for the differentiation of style in accordance with instrumental idiosyncrasies were very favourable; for in the early years of the development of our modern music, some three hundred years ago, men hardly ever attempted to combine instruments of different powers and qualities. They

wrote for stringed instruments at one time, and for harpsichords at another, and so on with organs and trombones, managing so that when they had to combine instruments with voices they only used the phases of style which were common to both ; or, if they ventured on combinations of instruments with antagonistic characters they concentrated all their energies on one instrument and treated the rest as purely subsidiary, as is familiarly illustrated by that most abject of all compromises, a figured bass ! This situation naturally suggests the inference that diversities of type would be most marked in the earlier period of art, when aims were so simple, the physical conditions so obvious, and men's minds so little liable to be distracted by accessory causes and diversities of style, however engendered. But in reality the facts are all the other way, and every one who knows anything more of art than just what hits the ephemeral taste of their time must be fully aware of it. Style is subject to the same laws of progress as other things. The different spheres of art are not clearly differentiated at first, but become more and more so as art develops. The styles of organ music and music for stringed instruments and for domestic keyed instruments were all very much alike in their earliest stages, and as soon as any individual branch received special attention and composers found out new congenial passages for special instruments there was a tendency for one branch to borrow from another, as harpsichord and clavichord music borrowed from lute music and music for strings. Hence the singular combinations of instruments employed by Monteverde and a few other composers in the operas at the beginning of the seventeenth century presented no difficulties

in the way of complications. The style appropriate to the different instruments had not yet attained sufficient individuality to entail mutual concessions.

But as soon as composers who were also performers found out the type of diction which was best suited to their particular instruments, and how to express their ideas in such terms, the problem of combining them presented serious difficulties. To those who enjoy the fruits of two hundred years of patient artistic endeavour the problems of orchestration seem sufficiently simple, but to those who were only just beginning to climb the hill, and had no maps to show them the impracticable places, it proved indeed a most arduous undertaking—how arduous is most effectually shown by the fact that two of the greatest geniuses who ever adorned the art, Handel and Bach, frequently made failure of it. It will perhaps be enlightening to consider in what way this came about, and what is meant by saying that these two great composers only crossed the threshold of modern orchestration on very rare occasions, and then almost by accident.

It will be best to state the problem again. Given the style appropriate to instruments of different calibre and with different characteristics—to find the style of a composite whole which allows them to take a share in it together without abrogating their individualities. The most complete definition of such composite style is like the familiar definition of liberty. It is that which affords the fullest exercise of the resources of all the instruments engaged which will not hinder or diminish the effect of one another.

To take simple concrete cases. If one instrument cannot hold a note effectively for any length of time



but can run about at speed, and is to be combined with instruments which cannot run about at speed but can hold notes a long time, it seems to be perfectly natural and obvious that the decorative and quick figures should be given to the instrument which can move with ease and that the slower parts of the music should be given to those which cannot—and yet there are infinite numbers of cases in which the greatest masters did not see it and the most enlightened expounders of artistic wisdom forbore to take note of it. And one can only infer that at the time when the problem had to be solved in its bare simplicity it was by no means so easy as it looked. Most people are aware of the singular manner in which John Sebastian Bach (be his name ever revered) shirked the real solution of the problem—how, instead of combining stringed instruments and wind instruments into a heterogeneous but assimilated whole, he would use hautboys for the whole of one movement without the upper strings, flutes for the whole of another, a single horn (with secondary accompaniment) for another, and at other times trumpets, bassoons, oboi d'amore, lutes, viole da gamba, and so on, using each no doubt with purpose and effect to enhance expression, but keeping the families distinct and scarcely attempting amalgamation of the diverse types of style.

Even when not employing the instruments in isolated groups in this way his procedure is almost as ineffectual, for his well-known habit of writing the parts for all kinds of various instruments in separate contrapuntal lines, as if they were all of equal weight, fails utterly to get the full advantage out of them in the sense of orchestral effect. A

part written for the flute, for instance, is generally completely extinguished by the violins when it is written independently. And the effect of a hautboy bustling about (with so much less ease than more agile instruments) fails altogether to get a result proportionate to the amount of energy expended; while the mere doubling of stringed instruments with wind instruments often spoils the tone of the latter and adds nothing valuable to the effect beyond the mere access of sound; and the persistent employment of such doubling, as in the chorales of the Passion Music, causes a positive physical weariness.

It may well be asked how a man of such supreme genius could have failed to take advantage of obvious sources of effect; and it is possible that the reason may be found. It can hardly be supposed that Bach and Handel would have failed to see the opportunities which wind instruments afforded of sustaining harmonies and intensifying colour if their minds had been projected in a favourable direction. But their habits of mind were not adapted to such simplicities of procedure. They thought of things in lines rather than masses. The influence of counterpoint was still most powerful with them; and even in the most imposing effects, which seem to us to have such massiveness and grandeur, all the inner work is distributed in definite melodious parts, the independent vitality of which was one of the glories of their art-work. Their highest type of art was the fugue; in which the composer's aim was to make all the separate parts as clear and as definite as possible. To have blurred and hidden up the separate lines by making some of the instruments hold on such chords as underlay the

elaborate texture of independent parts would have defeated one of the chiefest of their aims. It would have militated against the hearers' attention being concentrated on the play of the subjects—which, be it remarked, were in single lines and not in masses; and would have distracted the attention from the subtleties of polyphonic structure. Moreover, as an incidental but important point, the changes of harmony, being exceptionally rapid and vigorous in polyphonic music, made unfavourable ground for the employment of sustained chords by the wind instruments. The changes were for the most part not spread systematically enough for the chords to be presented in organized succession, and would have sounded too obviously accessory to the general scheme of the work to be tolerated. Hence it was that Bach and Handel did little in the direction of solving the problems of modern orchestration. There are moments here and there in Bach's works when the colour is so wonderful that the most advanced masters of modern orchestral effects cannot hope to rival it. But the essential fact is that Bach dealt in lines, and only projected his mind in the direction of colour as a matter of secondary importance. It was not till composers looked at things from a different point of view and thought of groups of harmonies as essential to their scheme that the idea of using sustained notes and chords for wind instruments simultaneously with the livelier movement of stringed instruments could be approached. But in order to arrive at this further stage in the evolution of art it was necessary, as usual, to step back to a very much lower level than that of Bach and Handel.

The composers of Italian opera cared very little

for detail or for interest of texture or internal organization. In their province such things were superfluous. Their instinct led them at least right in this; that they did not waste their energies on work which was not apt to the attainment of their objects. But unfortunately their productions appear to modern minds to be flabby, lifeless, and indifferent in texture; and it is no wonder that Bach was not inspired to imitate methods and lines of action which induced such defects. As the idea of a simple harmonic basis to music was new, the Italian masters used only very limited range of harmonics. They aimed at music which afforded the best opportunities for vocal melody. The contrapuntal methods which were congenial to J. S. Bach would have been quite out of place in connection with operatic music of this kind. For the contrapuntal music was essentially of the nature of absolute music, and was wrought up to the highest pitch of artistic perfection to justify its existence on purely artistic grounds; whereas the music for the stage must be justified by its relation to the subject of the drama and its vicissitudes and episodes, and superfluous contrivances, used purely for the purposes of art, would be liable to take too much attention away from the singers, who, being the actors in the stage piece as well as the singers, might fairly claim to occupy the greater part of the audience's attention. The idea of enhancing the expression of melody by characteristic harmonies and characteristic formulas of accompaniment had hardly dawned on men's minds; and what composers had to do first was to organize the harmonic substructure of the movement into clear and satisfying designs. And with that

aim they contented themselves with formulas of accompaniment of very simple description, and gave up trying to make their texture interesting; while the background of tone was supplied by the haphazard subterfuge of a figured bass. And as the contrapuntal influences gradually diminished, the harmonic scheme of the composers of the operatic school grew simpler and simpler, and lent itself more and more to adoption of the most elementary forms of the true composite orchestral style which has been before referred to; that is, the use of wind instruments to maintain a background of sound, while violins dealt with the essential figures and animated subjects or formulas of accompaniment, in accordance with their aptitudes.

The limitations of the laws of progress are most conspicuously illustrated in the extreme simplicity of the methods of procedure first adopted. For when composers first tried to use their wind instruments in a distinctive manner they seemed to think it unnecessary to give their utterances any form or definition, and required them to do but little beyond taking harmony notes and holding them till the harmony changed. This, no doubt, seems a very mild step in individualizing the work of different instruments; but it is worth recalling that it often seemed sufficient to Haydn and Mozart and even in some cases to Beethoven. In such cases the work done by different instruments is not organized to an equal extent throughout. The work of the violins is highly organized, and that of the other members of the orchestra comparatively vague; the former has crystallized into clearly marked forms, and the latter remains semi-nebulous.

## SYMPHONY IN C MAJOR

MOZART.

Hautboys and Trumpets.

Horns and Bassoons.

Violins.

Violas, 'Cellos and Double Basses.

The coupling of violas with double basses in the first three bars shows the influence of habit.

etc.

Of course it is not to be supposed that wind instruments must always of necessity be obtruding their idiosyncrasies in the composite whole. Often, even in the most advanced state of orchestration, they mainly occupy the subordinate position of supplying colour or doubling the strings; but as orchestration developed more perfectly we find their sphere of work organized on proportionately equal terms with that of the violins. The colour is supplied in passages which have an organization of their own, comprising forms of figure which are appropriate to their physical requirements and interspersing phrases of their own in answer to the phrases of the strings.

But then we come to another side of the question. In modern orchestral works we find a kaleidoscopic profusion of different kinds of instruments, each with its own individual style arising from its physical peculiarities; flutes, hautboys, corni inglesi, clarinets, bass clarinets, bassoons, double bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones, tubas, drums, harps, and varieties of stringed instruments. Such a combination represents an extraordinary variety of opportunities for the composer who knows how to use them; one group being serviceable for brightness and agility, another for pathos and poignancy, another for warmth and expression of a luscious kind, another for roughness and humour and plaintiveness, another for roundness of tone, another for strident force, another for mighty accents and explosions, another for rhythm, and another for ecstatic melody or brilliant rushes of sound, another for cadaverous mysteries, another for passionate ardour, and yet others for depth and mystery. Truly, human feelings have in such an organization ample means for being

fully represented. But the manner in which such a multifarious concourse could be manipulated had to be found out step by step. Men had to begin with the simpler combinations first. The early composers of instrumental music were wisely content with a very limited group to begin with. When they definitely faced the composition of orchestral music they for the most part adopted a group of eight instruments at a time, in which two classes of wind instruments were combined with the stringed instruments. Thus we commonly find in the earlier *sinfonias*, which were imitated from the operatic overtures, strings with two flutes and two horns, or with two hautboys and two horns; and at times composers ventured on the addition of a solitary bassoon. Of these the two horns were especially serviceable in the manner above referred to, for they had no agility and could not play violin passages, so they were necessarily confined to the business of holding on the harmonies while the more agile instruments ran about. And even in this small array composers did not distress themselves to make much use of instrumental idiosyncrasies. Even the strings were not completely organized, and the violas were frequently directed to play with the basses, even when the passages allotted to the basses went below their compass.<sup>1</sup> The wind instruments were strictly subordinate, and the main burden of the actual operations was allotted to the strings. By slow degrees composers added new colours to the scheme and new sources of expression. Clarinets came in long after composers had started the true develop-

<sup>1</sup> The survival of this slovenly tradition is illustrated in the passage quoted from Mozart's *Symphony in C* on page 81.



ment of orchestral music ; and though trombones had been in use almost immemorially, they did not figure seriously in orchestral music till quite late days. So it appears that even when composers knew of instruments they rarely dared to combine them in large numbers.

In such slow steps of development the same law of progress is found as elsewhere ; simple combinations first, and the more complex combinations as, step by step, men mastered the methods upon which they could be dealt with. Progress is always towards the more decisive differentiation, and it surely is nowhere more conspicuously shown than in the story of orchestral music ; beginning with a simple group of a few instruments, which were but inadequately used in respect of obtaining from each their appropriate ministrations, and then proceeding by constant addition of instruments which enhanced the possibilities of expression and colour, and by finding out how to amalgamate their idiosyncrasies into a composite and convincing whole.

The process has been steadfast and uniform in principle, increasing in speed as if gathering momentum, and is still developing with vivacity in the twentieth century. The reason that it has taken so long is that the introduction of fresh instruments does not mean merely the addition of a new colour or element of force, but an element which comes in with its own qualities and peculiarities of diction. It is not enough merely to write a part for a new instrument. According to the ideal conception of orchestral music, which is now clearly recognized, each new instrumental part has to be organized like all the other parts of the art-work in accordance with

the style which is appropriate to it. It has to have, indeed, that particular share in the operations which it and it alone can adequately perform. Each new instrument makes the style more complex, and in making it more complex, makes it more comprehensive. The insatiable impulse of the true artist is to enhance the means of expression of his ideas. The production of novel effects is a secondary matter, the object of second-rate minds. Yet even that tends to enlarge the resources of orchestral expression. The familiar saying about stepping back in order to jump farther seems to be almost invariably true in art. Even such subordinate operations as the introduction of new elements into the orchestral scheme commonly entail a temporary lowering of the vitality of diction, the adoption of too familiar phrasology in the part of the texture allotted to the new member of the family. The result of pressure in the particular direction of new orchestral effects is to bring back commonplace passages which, inasmuch as they are commonplace, have often been used and tested before, and are therefore well suited to the instruments; and are so far in accordance with the mere necessities of style, but do not minister to the close consistency of the ideas or expression. It is always inevitable that the requirements of what may be called the physical conditions of style must be solved first, and the finer adjustment to special conditions, to special types of audience, or for the expression of ideas, must follow afterwards. The machinery must be made before it can be used; but when it is being used men find out so much by practical experience that the original purposes and principles seem sometimes to be lost sight of.

The process of development in other branches of art in which voices and instruments or instruments with different characteristics are combined has been on similar lines. In songs with instrumental accompaniment (except in the contrapuntal forms illustrated by J. S. Bach) it was natural that attention should be concentrated on the voice part at first; and the part allotted to it attained to perfect fitness for vocal expression and vocalization while the accompaniment was little more than a perfunctory support and devoid of intrinsic interest. The type there presented the immature phase in which the work is unequally organized. As the form grew more comprehensive and complete the accompaniment was made to serve in its sphere, first to enhance the general artistic interest by individuality of texture and character and then to add immensely to the expression by bringing all that harmony and rhythm and instrumental colour and figuration could do in that direction to intensify the meaning of the words or the situation suggested by them. In this form the voice part and the part for the accompanying instrument are completely differentiated in style, completely balanced in artistic organization, and also completely wedded together. It serves in the advanced form as one of the happiest and subtlest examples of the combination of two very distinct types of style, which in the finest examples are complementary to one another. It was not possible that such a consummation should ever have been attained without very long and concentrated endeavour on the part of many generations of composers; and it is only in recent times that the form can be regarded as absolutely mature.

Similar stages of growth are manifested by such

forms as the combination of solo stringed instruments with pianoforte in sonatas, quartets and quintets, and other such types of chamber music. The tendency in the earlier stages was to give most attention to the stringed instruments, especially in sonatas, and to be satisfied with subordinate treatment of the pianoforte. But in this case also the treatment of the pianoforte was by degrees brought up to the level of the stringed instruments, thereby greatly enhancing the scope of artistic effect. The tendency of such chamber music in later times, through its ceasing to be genuinely chamber music and becoming concert music, has been to make so much use of the sonorous effects of the pianoforte that the strings have often to be massed together in orchestral style rather than chamber music style in order to compete with the volume of sound. And this indicates the subtle adaptation of style to new conditions.

## VI

### FORM AND STYLE

It may be as well to recognize in good time that style and form are nearly akin, and that they are not only liable to be confused, but that from some points of view their provinces seem to overlap. As has been said before, the test of style is the consistent adaptation of the materials of art or literature to the conditions of presentment; which is as much as to say that it is influenced by the nature of the material in which it is executed, the disposition and standard of intelligence of the audience or spectators to whom it is meant to appeal, and the circumstances or situations in which it is to be presented. But it must at once strike any one who gives thought to the matter that "form" is based on the same influences. The forms of works of art also vary with the qualities of the materials in which they are executed as much as their styles. If they are executed in iron or wood or stone, they must necessarily differ in form in accordance with the inherent properties of the materials. The form of a literary work is influenced by the purpose it is meant to serve. The form of a work which is meant to be presented on the stage is bound to differ from the form of a work which is meant to be read and lingered over in privacy and quiet seclusion; and

the form of addresses made to an excited mob in a political agitation would be different from the form of the address of a scientist to fellow-men of learning. Moreover, it is common to speak of the form of details, such as the form of a sentence or the form of a musical phrase; and such form is easily confused with the style of such details. Hence it is obvious that form and style both take their characteristics from the same sources and influences, and are evidently so closely interwoven that it is often hard to keep them apart and to discuss one without getting into the domain which it has been customary to consider as belonging to the other. It therefore becomes unsafe to discuss style in detail without anticipating the status and nature of form, and trying to find an adequate basis of distinction and to show that if the lines of demarcation are not absolutely decisive, any more than the lines of demarcation between the animal and vegetable kingdom, still there is a central idea which attaches to the respective conceptions.

It will be easier to judge of the relation of form to style if precautions are taken against haziness of definition; and as the word "form" has been unfortunately very much in evidence in the discourses of theorists and analysts of music it is well to give it some little attention. It would indeed be preferable to speak of organization, because the word form is so liable to be misunderstood. By form in music men really mean the particular scheme or system upon which a work of art is organised. They mean the principles by which the thoughts which the artist wishes to express are brought within the real range of art. Chaos is as preposterous in art as it is impossible in nature; the essence of art is to

be perfectly organized. Mere wild exuberance in the outpouring of excited feeling or sensuous intoxication in colour and tone is not art at all. Till the feelings which a man wants to express are systematized upon some principle which will stand the test of intellectual analysis they do not come within the range of art; to lack organization is to be merely idiotic and incoherent. True it is that ingenuity and subtlety of form have often been overvalued. Form is not an end, though it is an essential. It is the means by which thought or feeling or aspiration is brought within the domain of art, but if there is no impulse in the man beyond it, the product is mere vanity and emptiness. From the excess with which it is emphasized by writers on music people might be misled into supposing that some of the highest achievements in the art attained their pre-eminence on account of the intricacy and ingenuity of their construction. But in truth a great work of art is great because of the thought or the feeling which it expresses and only secondarily for the scheme or plan in which the thought or feeling is presented. The method of organization or form may be especially admirable on account of its aptness to the thoughts or feelings which the artist has to convey, and it may merit consideration on account of the manner in which it brings them home to the mind. But no amount of ingenuity in the manipulation of the scheme of presentment can raise commonplace or trivial thoughts to a high place among the great manifestations of art. And it seems very probable that great thoughts imperfectly organized are more valuable than indifferent thoughts presented with extraordinary skill of organization. The highest

justification of organization is to be exactly apt and proportionate to the thought which has to be expressed. To elaborate the form of presentment of a commonplace thought which could be adequately expressed without any elaboration is not only superfluous ; it makes the commonplace more exasperating.

The reason for difference of degree in elaboration is easily made intelligible. The higher kinds of art, like the higher kinds of human beings, are more highly organized ; for being so enables them to effect more than such as are lowly organized. The snippets and trivialities of the variety entertainment, the songs of the ballad opera, and such types of art have their lowly organisation, parallel to that of the lowest organisms in nature, such as the confervæ, the infusoria, the amœbæ, the jelly-fishes ; and such lowly organization is adequate for lowly and insignificant purposes. Man attained his pre-eminent position in the sphere of living things because he was capable of being developed to the highest pitch of complex and subtly efficient organization ; for the art of the highest quality similarly copious methods of organization are required. And the methods of organization of art, like the multifarious organization of all the components of the body of man, are the fruit of long processes of development. They may be said to be, as in the case of man, the result of the reactions of the environment upon the sensitive material. Art in its slow growth continually found new means by which organization could be effected, new processes by which the thought of the artist could be clearly and attractively presented to other human beings. And as each branch of art evolved its more perfect identity it developed principles of form which were more and



more perfectly adapted to the conditions of its presentment.

It is of great importance to realize at the outset that the possible varieties of principles of organization are practically illimitable. It is not so long ago that the musical world passed through a strange phase in which the almost miraculous perfection of the manipulation of "sonata forms" by such great masters of instrumental music as Mozart and Beethoven so monopolized men's attention that even philosophical and learned writers on the art failed to observe that the conditions to which these orders of form were adapted, and for which they had been laboriously evolved by men of the highest genius, were of a special kind, and were only admirable in the highest degree when employed for special types of art. In the highest sense sonata forms are only suitable for instrumental music, and indeed only for instrumental music of a certain well-defined type. For those whose dispositions were specially appealed to by perfection of organization, the sonata type seemed the highest manifestation in music. It may even be admitted that the type of mind to which such qualities appealed was a high one, and that it was often combined with the faculty of understanding and of being in touch with the great or beautiful thoughts for whose exposition the highest types of artistic form were employed. But it clearly was a misconception to infer that, because this type of art presented the finest examples of analysable form so far realized, there could be no other branch of art which could approach it in importance or prestige, and that all other branches of art must follow the same methods of organization in order to merit

the full approbation of men of taste and understanding.

It is indeed becoming apparent that one of the drawbacks of sonata forms is that they are too limited. The strict and very definite schemes on which they are based do not admit of much expansion without ceasing to represent faithfully the sonata type. Moreover, the type tended to emphasize the formal at the expense of the spiritual. It was specially adapted to a particular period and a particular class of people who combined a high standard of cultivated artistic intelligence with an elaborately constituted code of conventional habits and criterions. They were people who believed with a completeness of conviction which had become second nature in the efficacy and importance of formalities. It was essential to them that human beings should be in their right places; the elegant courtiers and hereditary gentlefolk at the top and the common men at the bottom. And when the position of the aristocratic classes ceased to be based on higher efficiency and ability to lead and rule and administrate, it had to be maintained by artificial means, such as subtle conventions of manner, speech, and livelihood; and these conditions induced a formal and even conventional habit of mind, which applied to their arts as well as to their manner of living. And in art as well as life these formalities of everyday existence had a tendency to dull and discredit human feeling and to make people regard a display of it as a token of base origin and inferiority.

The sonata type of form was just adapted to this type of society. The scheme of organization which had been elaborated by the concentrated efforts of several generations of composers covered a very large

field of artistic requirements, aesthetic as well as intellectual, but it had become so subtly balanced that if one of the factors were missed out or a departure made at any point from the essential principles of the scheme, the whole would be thrown out of gear. The typical scheme was devised instinctively, from the very first infantile attempts till the most marvellous perfection was attained by the greatest masters of the form, for absolute, self-contained music. It provided for the presentation of certain musical ideas or subjects in certain relations of contrast and affinity to one another, for their dissection and development, and for their definite recapitulation in such a manner as to re-establish the feeling in the mind of the auditor of the particular position in the scale from which the movement had started; one of the essential features in the scheme being that the mind should be kept away from that point from the moment that it had been adequately established as the point of initiation till the concluding paragraphs made it return to its home again. Within the limits of this scheme there is a wide range of possible variation; but the fact that it became too familiar through the profusion of examples produced and that expectancy of systematic procedure always weakens the emotional capacity, made it unfit to be applied to any purposes but those which were in force in the days of its highest perfection. The sonata was essentially an aristocratic form of art, and it was inevitable that as soon as the aristocratic phase of modern history reached its apogee and approached declination the art which was so highly and so worthily characteristic of it should also begin to disintegrate. One of the most interesting features

in the situation was that the composer of all others whose disposition was most fervently democratic should have brought the aristocratic form to perfection and proceeded, before he had done with it, to introduce features which were bound to effect its dissolution.

It was the spiritual fervour of Beethoven which exalted the sonata to its highest phase, and there it hung poised for a short while at the extreme limit of possible adjustment of spiritual exaltation and perfection of design; and the composer evidently began to find the accepted scheme of organization which he himself had brought to perfection too constraining and restrictive to the impulse of his thought, and therefore endeavoured to find new types of form and to revive sundry earlier types of organization and combine them in various ways which departed from the essential principles upon which composers had been working for generations. From which arises the obvious implication that to the greatest of composers of sonatas the scheme, as established in his earliest complete examples, no longer appeared adequate for the expression of the new type of musical impulses and ideas which a changing order of society engendered. The suggestion may be hazarded that there is a very deep-set parallel between the choral music of its great period—the latter part of the sixteenth century—and the sonata type of its greatest period. For as in the one case the only possible type of pure uncontaminated style in music associated with words is presented by the choral music, in the other the only pure examples of intrinsically perfect style and musical design in absolute wordless music is presented by the sonata forms of what

may be called the sonata period. The sonata, therefore, is of all things the most perfect representative type of abstract principles of organization. It can only exist under conditions in which nothing hinders or distracts the attention of the composer from manipulation of design. Directly words are used, the sonata type becomes not only an anomaly but an irrelevancy. The value of the sonata as a type lies in its being absolutely and unqualifiedly an exposition of certain ideal principles of design or organization. To adapt it to words would imply the necessity that the writer of the words should also write them in sonata form. The absurdity is at once apparent. The sonata form is essentially a form devised for music; it is no more adapted to literature (except as an occasional sport) than it is to crockery ware. Parenthetically also it may be said that the style of sonatas is equally inappropriate for other departments of music. For it must be obvious that the more perfectly anything is carried out to suit special conditions the more impossible is it that it should serve equally well for totally different conditions. And this is indeed what practical experience has proved to be the case where predetermined forms of the sonata order and the reserved style of the sonata kind have been employed for operas. It is true such works may have great beauties and a special charm of their own, but they cannot be regarded as adequate or final solutions of the problems of either opera or song or any music wedded to words, either in form or style.

This leads to the recognition of the fact that the problems involved in all the various forms of art can only be solved finally in the respective spheres to

which those kinds of art belong. Mere transference of methods, or of form, or of style from one branch to another must remain inadequate, unless the conditions are in some wise so much alike that a transformation can be effected within the range of the essential qualities in which the branches agree. The history of the musical drama affords the most conspicuous proofs of the inadequacy of transplanted methods; for, in the period of its semi-maturity, when composers found themselves at a loss, they tried to disguise the fact by doing something which they had found to answer well enough in other branches of art. But in the earliest phases it was not so. The very innocence of their scheme caused composers to take the right course and to refrain from the practice of borrowing from existing forms the methods and types of procedure which were devised for quite different conditions. It is true they were helped to take a totally independent line by the fact that the only branch of art which had attained to maturity, the branch of choral art, was so totally different from what they sought to achieve that the methods and forms were almost incapable of being employed for histrionic purposes. And they were also helped by the fact that they were avowedly attempting a new kind of secular art; and this drove them to begin at the bottom, facing frankly the problems which belonged to the art of musical drama, and trying to solve them in their own sphere.

It is well to remember that when opera began composers had not even the faintest suspicion of effects which have become everyday experiences to later generations. They had no idea of the uses of tonality, nor of the effect of design which can be

produced by the use of various keys. They knew nothing of modulation or of the subtle gradations of feeling which can be expressed by its skilful use. Powerful discords had never come within the range of their experience, and they would not have known what to do with them if they had had them. They knew nothing of instrumental colour, or the manner in which it excites the sensibilities and enhances the emotional power of music; they scarcely knew what a musical subject or figure was, and if they had had any dim consciousness of such a thing they would not have known how to employ it to give definiteness and coherence to the music. They had no suspicion of the immense development the methods of art were destined to undergo. They probably did not realize that there was such a thing as development at all, but thought that their resources were quite adequate to solve the problems of opera. For their idea was no more than to supply solo voices with declamatory music fitted to the words, and support them with the accompaniment of chords. The accompaniment had hardly any further function than to supply such support; for no musical figures or rhythm were employed and the harmonies were for the most part quite meaningless, and little attempt was made to intensify the expression by the use of effective discords. In the earliest experiments there is indeed very little attempt at expression in the voice part; and scarcely a sign of formal melody or tune.

Peri's *Euridice*, which had the honour of being the fountain-head of the long development of opera, is like the pale gleam before the dawn; so quiet is it, so cold, so devoid of the signs of human life of any

kind. Occasionally there is an obscure hint of awakening instinct when the actor in the drama is in an exceptionally moving situation. Thus, when Orfeo, having lost his beloved Euridice, descends into the lower regions and addresses himself to the gods and demigods to plead for her restoration to life, there is a short passage which has some genuine pathos; and in the reiterated cry of "misero, misero," there is a striking anticipation of human musical expression, in which, for once in a way, discords are used to convey the feeling of distress.

EURIDICE PERI.

Voice. *EURIDICE* Ohi - - me! Ohi - - me! Che sull' Au - ro - ra giun .

Voice. *PERI.* . . se all' occa-so Il sol degl' occhi miei. Mi - se-ro, Mi - - se-ro!

An innocent elementary feeling for variety is shown in the introduction of short passages of chorus which serve as ballets, which are more definite in rhythm than the rest of the work; and one little episode which stands out from the rest is a passage in which a shepherd Thyrsis sings and plays melodious passages on a triple flute. These little diversities may be taken as the first glimmerings of the dormant instinct for organization, because they afford welcome



variety at fairly defined points to the monotony of the declamatory quasi-recitative of the solo voices. Beyond this there is hardly any definite form at all.

Peri's adventurousness, therefore, does not go much beyond the enterprise of attempting a new form of art; but as the novelty of the experiment evidently aroused keen interest, the composers who followed began at once to apply their minds to an enhancement of the scheme. Of these Monteverde was undoubtedly the foremost, and was a man of very different mettle. To him it was a necessity to find musical terms which expressed the human feelings which belonged to the various situations. But he, again, mainly relied on the voice, and he taxed it severely. For in his efforts to make it cover a great deal of ground he attempted things which have been quite out of modern ken till they reappeared in some of the new operatic surprises of the twentieth century, and which must regretfully be acknowledged to be in many cases almost laughable to our unaccustomed ears. If the same situation be taken in his *Orfeo* which has been referred to in connection with Peri's *Euridice*, when the hero addresses himself to the gods of the infernal regions, he is found adopting forms of vocalization which are almost childish in the simple obviousness with which they betray the histrionic intention.

ORFEO

MONTEVERDE.

Voice.

Or - - - - - fe - - - - - o - - - - -

The image shows two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a vocal line (labeled 'Voice') and a piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is G minor (two flats). The vocal lines contain lyrics: 'son' and 'io.' The music is highly chromatic and features many sixteenth notes, characteristic of the late Renaissance or early Baroque period.

The original versions of this and the next illustration are in G minor.

But over and above such strange use of vocal effect Monteverde certainly showed a remarkable insight into the possibilities of harmony and of progressions of chords as a means of expression; a type of procedure which remained latent after his time for centuries, except sometimes in Purcell and Schütz and a few others of their time and peoples, and has only reasserted itself in its full power since the romantic phase came into being in the last century; chiefly because harmony was regarded so essentially as the basis of formal organization in the sonata range of art that it was not realized as a factor in expression. The last few bars of the episode above referred to are especially notable, as they are not only elaborately chromatic, but produce their effect by implying a sophistication of tonality almost as subtle as might have been employed by Wagner.

## ORFEO

MONTEVERDE.

The image shows a musical score for a scene from Monteverde's *Orfeo*. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for the voice, labeled 'Voice' on the left. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 7/8 time signature. The melody starts on a whole note, followed by eighth and sixteenth notes, and ends with a long, expressive melisma. The bottom staff is for the lute, with a bass clef and the same key signature and time signature. It provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Below the voice staff, the Italian lyrics are written: 'Ahi chi nie-ga il con-for-to al - le mie! pe - - ne . . . . ?'.

But even Monteverde, original and characteristic as his work is, but rarely produces features of this kind. In his earlier and most interesting phase he seems for the most part to have thought that the association of music with words made definiteness of organization superfluous. It is a very common misconception, especially characteristic of youth and phases of art which are in youthful stages, and was most excusable in the case of the early dramatic composers, because none of the most important musical types of form had yet even begun to grow. But even he showed that the instinct for design was alive, as the vocal solo called "The Lament of Ariadne," which has always been recognized as the most poignantly expressive passage remaining of the works produced in the first ten years of operatic history, is in the simple primary form of three divisions, with beginning and end corresponding and a contrasting passage in the middle; such as afterwards became, as the too well-known "aria-form," the bane of the most formal period of opera. However, Monteverde was not disposed to weaken dramatic expression by wrestling with problems of organization. His object was to intensify the words and the situations by music, and crude as the results are, they are extremely interesting.

His remarkable pupil Cavalli followed the same path, keeping expression well in view. He, however, made many experiments in design, sometimes hitting off the complete aria form, and at other times speculating in quite logical dispositions of the components of his solos in different schemes. And then came the singular change which indicates almost humorously the fact that composers realized that mastery of clear principles of organization was indispensable. After Cavalli, the Italian opera composers, led by Alessandro Scarlatti, devoted themselves mainly to the exploitation of that single primary form of which Monteverde had afforded an example; and finding that audiences acquiesced in a low standard, contented themselves by employing the one simplest type of form and abandoning any intention of being true to the dramatic ideal. All pretence of approximation to logical realization of really dramatic schemes went overboard, and the Italian opera became a conventional musical entertainment.

The French development of opera took quite a different line, owing to the overpowering taste of the French Court for ballet; and their opera had a kind of spacious organization of its own, based on alternation of ballet scenes and declamatory solos. In due time came Gluck and Mozart and Weber, and attempts were made to fit music more closely to schemes which had some dramatic sense in them. There is no need to follow out here the long story in which composers endeavoured to devise methods of organization which were perfectly consonant with the dramatic details and plans of the various stories and subjects set to music, in such a way as to emphasize the situation both in detail and in general without

sacrificing real dramatic development to the supposed exigencies of musical form. One after another the fixed and predetermined forms went overboard, till the music seemed to fit and emphasize the action without hindrance; and at the present day the music seems at times to be even receding into secondary importance and to serve mainly as an undercurrent and helpful ancillary to plays which are declaimed as freely as if the music were non-existent. But still organization has been inevitable, and though it does not obtrude itself it follows the necessities of artistic coherence as well as of dramatic appositeness.

Here it must be observed again that if the methods of organization have always been developed in their own particular departments even more so is it the case with style. The style of operatic music was developed in opera, and where attempts were made to adapt methods of absolute instrumental music to operatic purposes the resultant style proved fallacious and had to be abandoned. And the same was the case with instrumental music.

In each case the style which was developed in attendance on the different methods of organization was differentiated more and more as progress was made. Wherever the style of stage music resembled the style of instrumental music it was immature, and *vice versa*. The difference between the styles of different kinds of music was as inevitable as the difference between their methods of organization. When thinking without sufficient deliberation it would be easy to be misled into the opinion that a thing could be well organized and yet styleless. That is because a thing can be well organized and yet æsthetically unattractive. It is only a part of style

to be attractive. It combines the æsthetic qualities which attract with the practical qualities which appeal to the mind. In this sense style appears in the light of being the general flavour or aspect of the characteristics of organization. It is the outward effect of form in detail and in general ; inevitably associated with form, and yet not form but something which subtly emanates from it.

## VII

### INFLUENCE OF AUDIENCES ON STYLE

#### I

ALL subjects seem simple when we know very little about them. But the very simplest subject surprises us with the complexity of the unexpected aspects which present themselves directly we get to know anything about it. The question of style is certainly no exception to the rule; the further we get into it the more copious seem the conditions which have to be taken into consideration. And they often run counter to one another to such an extent that there is hardly a rule which can be laid down or principle enunciated which may not be almost negatived by some other consideration presenting itself under special circumstances. We may take as an illustration the simple case of the positions of chords, about which the human mind in process of years evolved certain rules which are still recommended to the tyro. They were based on the idea that the chords had to be in the position which gave the most euphonious effect, but there came a time when men who agreed with the initial assumption that music should be beautiful found themselves practically at variance with the principles laid down. For by degrees it

dawned upon them that these principles had referred to choral music only ; and that in instrumental music quite different positions of chords were necessary to obtain the best effects. And yet another situation was reached, and men found themselves at variance with the amended principles when by slow degrees they found out that they did not want to be always using chords in their " best positions," but in fact very much the reverse. Even from the mechanical point of view excessive stress laid on euphony would tend to monotony, even indeed to satiety. From the more human point of view the restrictions were purely childish. Mature art does not want chords in their best, but in their most characteristic positions—the positions which help to emphasize the expression, and extend the range of possible variety. And the same kind of contradictory circumstances may be traced in the successions of chords, even in the forms of melody and the principles of organization. It is clear, therefore, that it is almost impossible to get any tests of style which are absolute and prevail under all conditions ; and the conditions are so numerous and so various that it is no wonder people have for the most part given up the problem as hopeless and insoluble, and have contented themselves with specious generalities and the presentation of what they regard as splendid examples of style. But the use of splendid examples of style is not apparent if we do not understand what style is ; and to arrive at that the only hopeful course is to decompose the influences into their components, and take them if possible in the order of their simplicity.

It has been suggested that style is the adaptation of diction or technique to the conditions by which



and in which a work of art or literature is to be presented. And it has been observed that in music the most elementary of conditions are those which are controlled by simple physical facts. What may be called the elementary or primary bases of style in music are the capabilities and limitations of the means employed to produce sound. We have seen that the style of music for voices differs from that of music for organs in respect of the things which voices are apt to do, and organs are not, and the things which voices can not do and organs can; and that the style of music for various instruments was evolved, probably unconsciously, by composers finding out what kinds of passages they could execute most effectually; and that it was not till they had solved the elementary problems involved in the physical characteristics of individual instruments that they passed on to the more difficult problems of compound style, involved in making music which was to be performed by combinations of instruments with different physical characteristics.

We have seen how difficult composers found it to solve the problems of orchestral music, and that to all intents and purposes they were not solved even approximately till our own time, and are still undergoing metamorphoses. But meanwhile countless other factors present themselves, ever increasing the complexity of the artistic problem. Perhaps the earliest to force attention on men's minds was the distinction between sacred and secular style. Here indeed there is a distinction which is only rendered difficult to recognize because men's views evidently vary very considerably as to what the word sacred means. To some sacred music merely means music

which is performed in the services of the church ; to others all that is inspired by spiritual aspiration, devotional feeling, or contemplative adoration in the presence of profound mystery. The most obvious distinction is that between music which is the product of religious states or of mundane states ; but it must be admitted that the widening out of both spheres has caused the styles to approximate and even to overlap. The earlier religious art was easily distinguished from secular art by a real element of loftiness and dignity, and in that simpler phase it was discernible that sacred art confined itself to a style which was mainly unrhythmic, while secular art proved to be essentially rhythmic. Secular music, it is true, soon reacted upon sacred music when it established its independence, even to the extent of employing opera singers to show off their tricks for the edification of the indiscriminating ; but even then we find the sincerer instinct for style reasserting itself in the fact that the operatic style of church music was reserved for the more spectacular functions of the Roman Church, while in the soberer services, which represented a more devotional attitude in the worshippers, the old style of sacred music was resumed. So whatever the practice may be, the distinction between sacred and secular style is a reality, and also a fairly simple one.

Matters become more complicated when we come to the distinction of style between that which is approximate to the two great genera of abstract music and music dealing with the meaning of definite words. And, again, another classification is imposed in the distinction between music associated with words or programme to be performed in a concert-room, and

music associated with words to be performed with all the distracting scenic accessories and actions of the opera. In the abstract music of the sonata type beauty was the ideal—beauty of melody, design, texture, harmony, colour, tone, and contrast, and interest of artistic development. But in music associated with words beauty took a new significance, and the ideal was the presentment of what was suggested by them in artistic terms which expressed and reinforced their meaning. And in music associated with the stage the success was measured by the degree with which the music adapted itself to the different conditions, including the mental state of the audience, the action, and the scenic distractions. But in all these complications the primary basis of style is maintained. Though the conditions of the theatre caused the development of a style different from that appropriate to the concert-room, and even more different from that of the classical sonata, the essential differences between the capabilities of the voices or instruments still persisted. Music intended for violins or wind instruments or pianoforte or organ was still regulated by their idiosyncrasies; and the object of the composer was to get exactly the best result attainable with each of the means at his disposal, while at the same time keeping in mind the various modifications rendered necessary by what we may call the secondary influences.

But these secondary influences go on multiplying as we go further into the question, and some of them seem almost to become entangled. One of the most subtle considerations of style is the regulation of a work with a view to make it intelligible to different grades of intelligence and different predispositions.

And of such gradations there must of course be millions of phases. The reactionary influences of the audience upon style are greater in music than in any other art or in literature, because a general refusal to give ear, or an inability to understand a work of musical art, means little short of absolute extinction to the composer. Even the drama is more independent of the public than music. For if a play proves utterly unplayable in a theatre, there are millions of people who can read it and enjoy whatever is good in it from a literary point of view or in respect of its intrinsic qualities. But if a large work of musical art fails to obtain acceptance the enormous trouble and expense entailed in getting up a performance stand in the way of its getting a second hearing; while not more than one man in a hundred thousand is capable of discerning its merits by reading the score to himself, and fewer still have the time to enter upon such a labour on the mere chance of finding something that will repay them—and, again, the heavy cost of printing large musical works often prevents the multiplication of copies till the public have given the sign manual of their approval. And therefore the works which might be saved from oblivion if they could be disseminated in a printed form are hindered from being printed until there is no further need to diffuse them to save them from that oblivion.

For these reasons music of all arts is even exceptionally under the control of the public, and becomes more and more so as taste gets more diffused, and the attitude of a majority just coming into touch with art becomes more aggressive. And under these conditions the taste of those who exercise controlling power is

helped to deteriorate by the inability of the composer to contend with unfavourable conditions; for few have the firmness and determination of character to maintain their independence, and to give what they know to be good rather than what they think will please. The manner in which the audience influences the development of style is most easily seen in art's lowest manifestations, where complications of various kinds do not obscure the issue. It is commonly and quite rightly held that music may be of the greatest service in refining the less prosperous classes and keeping them out of mischief. But it is generally overlooked that the wide promiscuous public has a remarkable capacity for exerting influence on music, both in its intrinsic qualities and in style. This becomes most painfully evident if any collection of folk-songs of Ireland or Scotland or England or France or Germany or Russia be examined, and compared with the music in which the same sections of society delight in our time. The folk-songs, which were once the prerogative and the pride of the people in its widest sense, are characterized by the purest beauty, by a simplicity, sincerity, tenderness, playfulness, innocent gaiety, healthy vigour; while the modern tunes, in which even the innocent little country urchin wallows as soon as he can toddle, represent all the brazen effrontery, the meanest grossness, and the most hideous inanity and blatant repulsiveness which our queerly compounded humanity is heir to. The people who wallow do not know that what they are wallowing in is degrading. But any one who has any interest in music at all recognizes the facts; and those who do not understand can at least see the difference between the music the

people used to delight in and the music they delight in now.

The facts suggest that it is just because music as an art is so little understood that the generality use it now to express their basest instead of their noblest qualities. For the most part people do not use literature as an outlet for their lower exuberance, because they understand words, and words would put them to shame. They do not often use paintings either for such purposes, because that, too, would betray them. But in music they do not know what they are saying, and it therefore becomes a convenient outlet for those baser impulses, which, if they knew it, they would probably be ardent in repudiating. One might almost say that literature and painting and their kindred arts are reserved for respectability and the presentation of high emotion and virtue, and music is reserved amongst the poorest and the wealthiest classes as an outlet for all their more disreputable and repulsive qualities.

It may doubtless occur to many minds that after all there is a low class of literature, represented by the foulness of the gutter press and by such works as are known as "penny dreadfuls," and low classes of pictures such as the fancy pictures of the commission of exciting crimes which may be seen in shop windows in the slums, and that the deterioration of the poetry of the masses from the old folklore is of exactly the same nature and as conspicuous in extent. It may even be admitted that the unsavoury qualities of slum art and poetry are permeating the higher kinds of art and poetry, as they are gradually contaminating music. But the saving clause in their case is that, as has been said above, the people know what the

subjects of literature and pictorial art are—they do not know what music means. And it may be said that inasmuch as the large part of humanity only indulge in music when they are in a roystering humour, and inasmuch as the roystering humour is essentially a wilful, reckless self-abandonment to animal exuberance, in which state all the higher qualities of human nature are temporarily suspended, it is not to be expected that the art in that phase can show anything but phenomenal deterioration.

It is a very singular fact that the actual nature of the deterioration induced by the stupid levity of the low-class audience working through commercialism can be shown in exact detail. It is in nature a parallel to the cockney pronunciation of the English language, which is ultimately the result of sheer perverse delight in ugly and offensive sounds affected by a class which is shut out from the influences of beautiful things of any kind, and perpetually demoralized by squalid and hideous town conditions. The hideous cockney sounds have many meanings—one of them is that combination of reckless, stupid self-assertion of the creature that has been brutalized by unfavourable conditions with spite against what appears to be better off, which is summarized by the slang word "cheek." Its counterpart is met with in the snipping of words and the affectation of ugly pronunciation in the parallel sections of the uppermost classes—who, it may be observed in passing, are the most powerful and constant supporters of the music hall and the type of entertainment which it represents. The music which is supplied for such audiences (which represent the uppermost and the lowermost classes) on the baldest business principles has definite and decisive

marks at different periods ; just as the ladies' fashions, which are arranged by the trade and meekly accepted by the sex, are marked at one time by the exasperating wilfulness of the cart-wheel hat and at another by the silly wantonness of the hobble skirt. For the purposes of argument it will be best to take a period a few years back and examine the salient marks in the type of art-product.

Every one who knows anything about music is aware that all the thousands upon thousands of men who have been endowed with musical sense at all in the past have agreed that certain features of art have certain meanings—what the scientist would describe as functions ; and further that certain progressions are stupid, ugly, and offensive. In these respects certain individual facts stand out. The note in the scale which is called the “leading note” was so called because it obviously led to the tonic and was dependent on it. It did not exist in most of the early ecclesiastical modes, and its history can be traced in detail ; which shows it to be the note in the scale which is least independent and least definite in the melodic sense. Even its acoustic status is dependent on its relation to the tonic ; and the fact has actually been verified that some of the most delicately susceptible singers and violinists have been accustomed to sharpen the note—unconsciously—in order to make it approach more nearly to the tonic. The fact of its melodic dependence on the tonic is therefore established with the most absolute conclusiveness. To wrench it away from the tonic and endow it with a special and marked independence would, therefore, be an obvious severance with the traditions of the history of its existence, and essenti-



ally the kind of thing which the mischievous and perverse mind would fasten on. It is a curious fact that, among the special traits which distinguish even good second-rate music in the latter part of the nineteenth century, an insistence on the independence of the "leading note" from the note to which it has been supposed to lead is most conspicuous. The taste for going from it to anywhere in the scale except its tonic was probably first diffused by the composer Grieg, who, among many delightful and lovable qualities, had just a touch of impishness in his nature. His compositions became very popular, and this cavalier treatment of the leading note, which was so conspicuous in them, filtered down, as such things do, into the slums of music. The point of it is that the cavalier treatment is not only there, but its being recognized as cavalier treatment is emphasized by its being incessantly and importunately there; being indeed in many cases the only point in a tune which has any real sting in it at all. For the purposes of argument it will be advisable to cull several illustrations from various low-class tunes which were very popular a few years ago.



3.

4.

5.

And in same. 6.

7.

There are various degrees of offensiveness in such treatment of the leading note. Grieg's treatment of it is generally restrained within the limits of artistic moderation. But the idea of a new treatment of such a feature having taken hold of beings who are not nurtured in things of beauty as Grieg was, could only be satisfied by increasing the excess of offensiveness. That is, by finding more objectionable notes to move to instead of the natural destination. One of the most objectionable is the drop from the leading note to the third of the scale, especially when the leading note is not part of a chord but merely a reckless intrusion.

8.



9.



But there is one interval of the scale which was considered especially offensive from the eleventh century until the middle of the nineteenth! This is the interval of the tritone, which even little children were taught to evade by recognized methods in the days when Erasmus was a choir boy at Utrecht! and which cunning dramatists like Wagner and histrionic masters like Berlioz reserved for special occasions. To tack this interval on to a cavalier treatment of the leading note would seem to be an almost superfluous stroke of mischief. Yet it has been achieved, and evidently affords delight to the perverted sense of the uninitiated. It is implied in the following from America :—

10.



11.



There is another progression which has always been regarded as too utterly stupid for any self-respecting musician to permit himself, the bane of the tyro in theory, known as "consecutive fifths." This progression also varies in degree when its stupidity is covered by something which overrides it in dexterity; and it is most offensive when it occurs between the "extreme parts" as between the melody and the bass. The fact that it is not met with in any music which has any pretensions to decency is obviously the reason why it was adopted in season and out of season by the purveyors of new tunes for the music halls. Such audiences are totally without criterions; and if a thing has not been heard before merely because it is objectionable or stupid the uninitiated audience feels only that it is new and is satisfied without asking why it seems so. The result is a formula which has been so common that it may fairly be called "the music-hall cadence," consisting in most cases of a very stupid progression in which the tune and the bass move in parallels of fifths. It has evidently taken a strong hold of the uncultured mind and forms an element safe to be rewarded with the popularity of the songs in which it occurs.

12.   And again. 13. 

14. 

15.



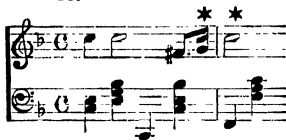
16.



17. French.



18.



Continuation. 19.



Such strokes of genius surely soar into an empyrean of exceptional rarity when they are found all packed at once into a few bars, as in the following very choice specimen which was heard in a public-house music saloon :—

20.



But if such things were rarities they would have no significance. It is their constant recurrence and the recurrence of endless features which bear the same

marks either of ignorance or impudence which give the music-hall type of art its special character. And that special character is due to the uncultured state of the audience and their determination to have "what they like"; which, instead of giving them independence as they suppose, only makes them the absolutely submissive prey of every one who wants to exploit them for profit.

In such things is to be observed the strongest confirmation of the supremely important part which the audience exercises in the determination of style. It must be admitted in one sense that even the sincere composer must have his audience in his mind's eye. Not in that shallow repulsive egotistic sense of gaining their applause, but in the sense of gaining admission to their faculties of apprehension. When a man is invited to write music for a music hall, or for the audiences of the average musical comedies, he would not only be showing himself lacking in the commonest of sense, but he would also be ignoring an essential principle of style if he produced music which had the higher artistic qualities of Beethoven's latest period, or Bach's Goldberg variations. He would be missing one of the essential conditions of style if he ignored the standard of receptivity of the people to whom he is addressing himself. He might as well expect to move a native Patagonian by reciting the noblest passages in English poetry in a language which would be no more to him than strange patter. After all, whatever people may be elsewhere, whether members of the Cabinet or the Bar, or of the most learned sections of humanity, when they are merged in the aggregate of a music-hall audience or the audience of a comic opera, they

have put off the garment of self-respect and must be judged as having faculties but little above those to be expected in an idiot asylum. But, as has been said before, the perfection of style is the adaptation of diction to conditions. It need not be supposed that our noble and learned brethren who find their relaxation in music halls and kindred institutions are to be blamed for occasionally throwing off the strain of responsibility which is entailed by having some degree of intelligence. It is only the necessity of being open-minded about the facts which compels a recognition of the influences exerted upon style by the attitude of mind as well as the natural aptitude of intelligence of the combined units composing an audience. Not only does the same man in his life play many parts, but he represents different individuals, in accordance with the particular group of faculties which are called into activity by circumstances. It is quite imaginable that two audiences might be composed of absolutely the same people who in one building would be incapable of attending to anything above a comic patter song, and in another building could be entirely absorbed in concentrated and unbroken attention to Beethoven's severest masterpieces. So in considering the influence of an audience upon style we have not only to recognize the actual capacity of artistic intelligence, but also the attitude of mind induced by surroundings or circumstances. And the essential in such a situation is consistency to the standpoint adopted. An illustration from literature may perhaps be admitted. The same man may have to write a lively article for a daily paper, and to write a serious historical study. In one case he would know that his audience would

be a large one and he must not expect too much liveliness of apprehension from them.<sup>1</sup> In the other case he knows that an allusive word will be quite enough to call up in the minds of a higher class of reader a wide range of suggestion, and that it would be purely superfluous and irritating to labour a point which will be understood without explanation. Here is essentially an important example of the influence of audience upon style—and the principle is confirmed if a writer slips, and so far loses control over his pen that in the midst of a highly pitched historic discussion he forgets the standard of audience to which he is addressing himself and drops into some silly weak joke or expression which might make the reader of a halfpenny paper chuckle, but only makes the reader of the higher class of literature mutter, “You have forgotten, sir, to whom you are addressing yourself!”

The higher the intelligence of the audience to which a man addresses himself the more he can pack into a sentence. A man who is sure of his audience can use imagery, suggestion, a group of words which covers a wide expanse of thought; and make his meaning so sure that a dozen words will convey with certainty more than a page of commonplace ephemeral journalism. If a man is addressing an audience of people whom he knows to be susceptible to beauty of language, he will avail himself of such resources as he has in that direction to ingratiate his

<sup>1</sup> An excellent illustration is afforded by a paragraph in an evening paper referring to Sydney Smith's well-known joke in saying good-bye to a friend who was on his way to labour as a missionary among cannibals—“Good-bye! I hope you will agree with your parishioners.” The writer who quoted the joke, not liking to leave anything to the quickness of perception of his readers, amplified the joke with “Good-bye! I hope you will agree with your parishioners, when they eat you”—and spoilt it!



subject with them, and *vice versa*. The parallel is exact with such works as Beethoven's later quartets, and not a little of Brahms's pianoforte music and quartets. The language is so pregnant with meaning to those who have minds developed enough to follow that the slenderest outline of a musical sentence contains the concentrated thought of a great seer. But the music addressed to the wider audience needs to be put plainly. Perhaps the reason why the style of men of great literary gifts commonly undergoes such a surprising deterioration when they take to politics is that they get into the habit of addressing a wider and less ready audience and have to abandon that pregnant, rich, and suggestive style which is the highest art of literature, and explain themselves with much superfluous matter, to be sure of being understood by an audience of second-rate intelligence. The composer in a similar position cannot afford to leave anything to intuition. The undeveloped mind will be utterly unable to grasp anything or realize the meaning of a single sentence. Everything must be put in and clearly and simply stated. Even the elaboration of texture which enhances the interest of a subject hinders the unready mind and must be eschewed, and so must everything unfamiliar. The unready mind feels at ease only in what is familiar. Even the touch of an original treatment of a more or less familiar formula makes the unintelligent being uncomfortable and throws the simple commonplaces out of gear. Many popular tunes are nowadays made up by the purveyors of such things by taking a few phrases which have caught the public ear and tacking them together in an order which has not been adopted before. It is the simplest and most frank way com-

posers have of availing themselves of the familiar fact that the shape fits the mould that is made for it. To speak figuratively—a thought, a form of words, a musical phrase that is reiterated wears a kind of channel or bed in the mind, and things in the same form go in with ease, while things which are unfamiliar have to force a more or less new channel, or modify the old. But things that go in with ease go out with ease. Repetition of the same formulas merely makes things go in easier and pass out quicker.

As for art, it never has any virtue whatever till it exerts some modifying effect upon the receptive nature. It never deserves its name till it finds that the channel worn by some other art product will not fit it, and that it has to call forth an energy in the being who can receive it to readjust the course or channel along which it can be received. True it is that the healthy, sane human creature delights in anything that awakens the feeling of his own vitality. But at the same time the incitement and quickening influence must be presented to him at the right moment and under the right conditions. He is not prepared to be enjoying the sense of his own vitality all day long, and music appears to be labouring under this disability with vast numbers of people, that they want it to be turned on at the moment when they have exercised their faculties sufficiently for the time being, and feel disposed to sink into a sort of semi-comatose condition and be gently tickled in some manner they are accustomed to. As has been before suggested, most people seem to want to take a familiarly flavoured dose of music when their faculties are almost in abeyance; and the only rousing which they will allow to be administered is the rousing of

the appeal to their senses—such as subtly graduated increase of masses of sound from slender soft incitements to the culmination in barbarous and violent uproar, or the reiteration of an exciting rhythmic formula, acting on the nature like the intoxication of dancing dervishes, or appeals to the senses by cleverly adjusted colours, such as are familiar in pantomimes and the elaborate ballets given at the principal music halls. The parallel, indeed, shows how deep-set is the nature of social progress, and is illustrated in the same way in different spheres. Everybody must admit that the elaboration of complicated colour effects in modern ballets is often really wonderful, even beautiful; but these dazzling effects are exactly on parallel lines with the new exuberance in colour in orchestral music; and even the great affection of composers for composite colours arrived at by constantly doubling instruments of different tone qualities is exactly on the lines of the subtle shades of colour in which the ballet-makers delight. But assuredly all these phases of progressive art are the product of the influences of the audience upon the composer; no composer who is stirred by the genuine impulse of the poetic artist wants to retail other people's sayings, any more than for his own pleasure he would pile up successive crescendos to a climax of incoherent frenzy, or emulate the primitive untutored savage in counterparts of the overture to *Gazza Ladra*. All such things show that the composers are not speaking for themselves, but saying what the audience wants to hear and in the manner in which they want to hear it. So it comes about that the composer who has something of his own to say is penalized at the

outset. The tendency is for public taste to eliminate all originality in matter and style and to expect the composer to be their humble servant, and to give them what they like instead of what he likes. The ancient and primitive position has a tendency to become reversed. It is no longer the men who are especially gifted with insight, and who have trained their natural gifts by study and contemplation, who may offer to that big audience the public what they know to be elevating, beautiful, inspiring; but it is the big public, which has little natural taste and has not cultivated that little, except backwards, which tells those who have taste and culture what they may have the honour to supply for the gratification of the new despots.

But there is another aspect of the question. The vast increase of opportunities to hear music, especially orchestral music, which has been such a striking feature in the past quarter of a century, has given a great number of people of a higher grade than those who confine their musical experiences to music halls and comic operas an opportunity for quickening their musical intelligence. And this increased opportunity has also served young composers with much more frequent opportunities to see how things are done and to test their own attempts. And the result has been a vast increase in technical facility, and in the knowledge how to handle orchestration with effect. But the effect upon town audiences has so far mainly been to quicken their gifts for taking in what they hear, but not to raise their taste or capacity to enjoy the higher phases of design and development of a great work of art. No doubt a capacity to apprehend great artistic achievements is

slowly spreading, but it is hindered by the tendency to dissipation which is the temptation of all big town populations and people in superfluously easy circumstances. They have wonderful quickness of a superficial kind, like gamins in the street, but do not like the exertion of long continuous attention.

A curious side issue may perhaps help to emphasize the influence of big town taste. One of the most noteworthy features of recent music has been the increase of the taste for the works of semi-civilized peoples; not, indeed, their folk-music, but the imitation of types of classical art by composers who have by habit or descent a great deal of the "untutored Indian" in their natures. The old classical forms—even the Fugue, which seems to have such fascination for Russian composers from Glinka downwards—seem to be infused with new life by the temperamental qualities of Slavs and Czechs and such races. But the products are strangely mixed. It is obvious that when the most cultured audiences prefer the music of the less developed races to their own, a lowering of the standard of their artistic perception and taste is implied, and a lessening of their sympathy with the productions of the best of their own composers is sure to follow. In any case the qualities which distinguish the greatest works of art are lost upon general audiences; and the style of music which pleases the music-hall audience creeps up into the higher standards of art, and the resources of extremely brilliant composers are applied for the exposition of a lower standard of idea. A great deal of the music supplied for a very wide public is extraordinarily clever in technique—brilliantly expressed—surprising in its vivacity and certainty of effect, but of lower intrinsic quality. It

is not so much used for great thoughts as for familiar and undistinguished ideas.

And so we come by another road to a point which has been discussed before. Art comes round by twofold influences towards indiscriminate characterization, the emphasis laid upon an infinite variety of illustrations of human moods, no longer aiming at the selection of high and elevated thoughts, such as inspired Beethoven and Bach and Brahms, but at the things which are nearer to the everyday experiences of ordinary people. It is like the phase which our countless clever novelists illustrate with a readiness of technique and an insight which are often remarkable. Programme thus becomes a natural outcome of the social evolution of our time. And it would be almost foolish to hope that we can have manifestations of the great and elevated type which was provided for us by the earlier composers; any more than, under present conditions, we can hope for great works of literature. The simplest laws of evolution show that constant differentiation is inevitable, which implies the constant splitting up into smaller and smaller units of organization. And the increase of multiplicity entails a narrowing of scope in the subject-matter, and a change of style to suit it.

It is pathetic to think how many devoted people are labouring to make the lives of less prosperous classes better and more spiritually wholesome through the instrumentality of music; while the classes they are trying to benefit have been so quick in exerting the influence of their worst characteristics on the art, that the very means employed as a purifier is befouled in itself and so degraded that it wants purifying as much as the people it was meant to purify. The

best we can say is that the great things we have even the fates cannot take away ; and there is good reason to be confident that with the quickening of general intelligence they may yet exert influence on the masses. The experience of successive generations ultimately purges out the baser products, while those which have higher qualities survive.

## VIII

### INFLUENCE OF AUDIENCES ON STYLE

#### II

THE object lesson which is supplied by comparing the people's music of the present day with the sincere and spontaneous folk-songs of old time seems liable to induce some readjustment of opinion in the minds of those who believe that music would be infused with new life and health by being taken up by the masses of the people. For it cannot be denied that the influence of the emancipated democracy, which takes its pleasure mainly in music halls and such types of entertainment as musical comedies, has brought about a phase of music (if it can be so called) which has no parallel for hollowness, blatancy, and reckless levity in any previous period of art's history ; and it seems inevitable that the contagion must spread and induce deterioration also in the higher branches of art. It must indeed be admitted that the phraseology of the lowest forms of art, the slang, the familiar idioms, the misapplication of artistic methods, the grotesque irresponsibilities of the gutter have already crept into the higher branches of this art, as the same types of utterance have crept into literature and poetry.



But it is not fair to put all the blame on the masses. The survival of any fine kind of art seems always to be an anomaly. It persists in defiance of unfavourable conditions. The people who are capable of appreciating fine qualities of art are always in a minority, and the majority find few things more galling than to be frequently invited to admire things which require a great and unwonted effort to understand at all. Moreover, the best of human kind are not always in a strenuous humour or ready at all times to exercise their higher faculties. Their best moments are also in a minority, and when they are in an irresponsible humour they accept the low standard of music which is supplied for the ingenuous masses with the laugh which disarms if it does not excuse. Again, fine art subsists in defiance of the most familiar principles of political economy. For political economy lays down as the basis of the relation of supply and demand that men work at that for which they will be paid in some form or other ; and the highest forms of art are the last things that any one will pay for, at least in the lifetime of the man who produces them. Every one is familiar with the fact that the greatest song composer the world has ever known received for some of his finest songs the remuneration of a few groschen—that is, the possible equivalent of a few glasses of beer—while the modern producers of songs reeking with false sentiment, devoid of any artistic merit, and pandering to the worst taste of the most inartistic of human beings, receive thousands of pounds for their productions. And in connection with such art-forms as quartets, symphonies, sonatas, overtures, and so forth, it may well be asked where any remuneration

is to come from; for only the most infinitesimal portion of the population of even the most musical nation cares to possess copies of such works by any composer whatever. Yet in spite of it all fine works of art go on being produced, and works that are not fine go on being forgotten as soon as they have run through their ephemeral vogue. It is one of the many conspicuous proofs that men are better than they seem, and that in spite of all that is said to the contrary by mundane cynics they still cling to that which they feel to be good and are not, in the end, entirely controlled by shallow material considerations. Composers who are worthy of the name still find exhilaration in striving their hardest to do something worth doing with the individual and peculiar gifts which have fallen to their lot, and though at times they cry out when they find it does not even bring them in sufficient bread and butter, much less luxuries and indulgences, they generally go back after moments of discouragement to their struggles with the inexhaustibly interesting problems of art.

But while we admire such single-hearted infatuation on the part of the composer, we must also admit that the influence of the general audience upon him is inevitable. At first sight the influence seems to vary with the individual disposition. There is every shade of difference from the type of the composer who is so passionately eager for sympathetic response from his fellow-creatures that he cannot help, out of sheer amiability, trying to adapt his line of thought and manner of utterance to the taste of those who surround him, to the type of composer whose passionate convictions are so intense that they will not allow him to make any concessions at all; and who

seems to be saying constantly, "This shall you have because I know it is good, and no other!"

The first type seems to be making his art with the guidance of his audience, and the other type to be more independent. But in reality the latter is also very much at their mercy. For if he is so uncompromising that he ends with addressing himself to deaf ears his work will not be performed, and he will miss the opportunity of testing his productions by practical experience. It is in this respect that the unfavourable attitude of the general audience can inflict the heaviest disabilities upon the composer; and in a manner which is peculiar to music. If a man makes a statue or a picture he can set it up and look at it with good chance of discovering anything in it which is defective; but setting up the score of a symphony and looking at it is a very inadequate test of excellence or deficiency. It is only by actually hearing his work that a composer can criticize it fully, and learn to make more sure of his ground. A man learns by finding out in practical experience where his way of expressing himself is inadequate, imperfectly intelligible to other minds, faulty in construction, miscalculated in the distribution of its salient points, even in the treatment of the respective instruments. It is well known that even the greatest and surest masters have reconstructed their works after the first performance, as Bach reconstructed the *Matthäus Passion*, Beethoven *Fidelio*, and Mendelssohn both *Elijah* and the *Lobgesang*. But the man whose work is too individual to meet with acceptance has little or no chance of testing his work by actual experience, unless he have taste and talent for intrigue, about which something

may be said later. And the very composers whose ideas are most difficult to express adequately are just those who will be denied the opportunity to learn how to express them most effectually by practice. From the general point of view this seems wasteful, from the individual point of view cruel. The wastefulness of nature, however, in general is proverbial, and it is probable that the proportion is not greater in respect of great works of art than in other phases of life; and laying stress on the niceties of poetic justice to individuals is always rather confusing. After all, the composer finds real pleasure and interest in working out his compositions; and the public, if it sometimes misses something really good, also saves itself from having to give attention to a great deal of self-complacency which is not well grounded. Men who have experience of the practical working of schemes for assisting young and ardent composers to get a hearing for their works have ample opportunities for realizing how great is the fascination and joy of writing full scores of huge symphonies and operas and symphonic poems and overtures; and how fortunate it is that the public should have some way of escaping from having to hear them even at the cost of some occasional injustice to individuals. The effect of this particular phase of the influence of the great audience is to purge out what is unpractical, and to minister to the survival of such things as are, for good or evil, representative in a general sense of the spirit of the times—probably not of its best spirit, but of the average general spiritual and temperamental standard.

But there is another aspect of the question slightly diverging from the above considerations. No one

disputes that the best work can only be the product of conviction. Setting aside the obvious fact that commercial art does not pretend to have any convictions, it is the degree in which a man has intense belief in what he utters that his work (in proportion to his ability) is good or bad. If a man's soul does not speak in his work, his message is not worth telling to the world. But in this connection music is on a different footing from other arts, for between the composer and the audience comes the interpreter, and if the interpreter knows not how to interpret, the audience has no chance of understanding the message. Moreover, the finer the quality of the music the more calls it makes on the insight of the interpreter. It was not really so much the technical difficulty of Beethoven's later sonatas and posthumous quartets which caused performances of them to be such rare events a quarter of a century ago, but the difficulty of interpreting them adequately. The way to interpret them was only found out by degrees as musicians of great insight applied their minds to them. The greatest music performed by a person who does not understand it sounds ineffably idiotic. The music that is full of meaning and of all kinds of artistic subtleties to convey that meaning requires more than ordinary outfit of discernment and sympathy as well as comprehensive technique in the interpreter. But the great run of average performers are merely striving to make a livelihood. If they do not contrive to please the public they will not get employment, and in order to please the public they have to adapt themselves to contemporary taste, and in so doing they get quite out of touch with things which are independent of its trend. It is a curious fact

that the success of any man's work depends on the extent to which the individuality which is expressed in it is such as the great mass of the people who listen to music can comfortably accept as sympathetic—whether it is such as they can abandon themselves to and assimilate and feel glad. But if the interpreter, who is the channel between them and the composer, does not understand what he is playing, and performs it in a mechanical manner, it must inevitably prove unsympathetic and unacceptable. And the unfortunate composer, who believes in what he has made, and yearns to find sympathy, seems to have no resource but to go through the degradation of trying to get people to listen to him. But the highest natures revolt against having to resort to such operations. It is impossible to think of Bach, or Beethoven, or Brahms trying to force their works into public notice, or wire-pulling or jobbing to get them performed. If a composer has something to say which is too fine and subtle for the taste of his fellow-men, the fineness of his nature will also prevent his telling them his work is good and they ought to listen to it. If his nature is not of the finest he may be able to insist on the merits of his work, but then there is a general likelihood it will not be of the finest quality either. So yet again the finer and more individual kind of work labours under heavy disabilities; for if the great audience is indisposed to give its attention, and proves imperviously unsympathetic, extinction and oblivion seem to be inevitable.

But in reality the facts do not prove this to be the case. It is very easy to be misled by ephemeral appearances. Public opinion and taste move in con-

sonance with certain regular laws in the wider spaces of history, but the manifestations of any limited period are deceptive. The great rhythm of progress has its hollows as well as its crests. A particular kind of art seems to take possession of the public mind at some given time in accordance with mere caprice of fashion, or fortuitous enthusiasm; and the result indicates the general standard of taste or temperament of that particular moment. But the individual phases are transitory, even superficial, and the general progress is maintained by the fact that the finer kinds of art have a deeper interest, and while the works which excite a temporary fever but have less noble qualities drop out, as fashion or the influences of suggestion draw men hither and thither, the purer types of art continue to interest and to satisfy a permanent instinct in the best minds and the most generous natures, and ultimately take their rightful place in general estimation. The things which please superficially soon pall, but the higher qualities continue to attract the best minds of successive generations, and they correct the short-sightedness of the public of any given moment.

It is well to consider the extent to which different types of audience have different relations with artists in general. Their influence varies with the constitution of society and social organization. The influences of the monarchic, or the aristocratic, or the democratic state of society are essentially diverse. When the patrons of art were comparatively few and highly cultured the producer of works of art was encouraged to adopt the ideal attitude of expressing his essential self—of producing what he enjoyed because it satisfied his particular artistic nature; for the great patrons

of art of former days realized that the most wonderful type of art could only be produced by leaving the artist unfettered. We can hardly think of Giovanni Bellini or Mantegna, or Carpaccio or Filippo Lippi, or Giotto or Cimabue or Mabuse, or even Botticelli, working with any other object than to make an art product which satisfied their own instinct of delight in artistic achievement, in making that which filled them with the joy of a soul-satisfying accomplishment; and their munificent patrons accepted and mostly paid for what they gave them without attempting to influence the style or lines of their work.

A difference is perceptible directly the art producer begins to address himself to a more general audience. He begins to work on the lines of more general effect. We can even see the dim suggestion of the influence in Titian, and still more in Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese, with all their supreme gifts; and in the music of all the opera composers from Alessandro Scarlatti and Handel and Mozart down to Rossini and the earlier Verdi, the earlier Wagner, Gounod, and Meyerbeer. Far the widest general audience is that which patronizes opera; and it may be admitted that the operatic style demands a much more spacious method of treatment—that subtleties of art in the abstract are to a great extent thrown away in it; but all the same, the late work of Wagner may be pointed to as indicating the employment of even extreme subtleties of form and development with perfect success in operatic work. Many pages of his work in the *Meistersinger*, *Tristan*, and the *Ring* are as full of subtlety of artistic thought and treatment as the most delicate



work meant for domestic contemplation—pages in which every bar has its relevancy, its perfect modelling, its subtlety of suggestion, its intricate manipulation of every detail of figure, colour, and progression. In his case it was the very hostility of the public which drove him in upon himself and induced him to take delight in the highest exercise of his powers; the same delight in developing interest of texture which the earlier Italian and German painters displayed, though from a vastly different motive and impulse. Every one knows how marvellously his powers developed with exercise, and it seems certain that if Wagner had won success instead of hostility at first the world would never have seen works enriched with such supreme development of artistic resource, of such wonderful concentration of artistic power in detail, of such unrivalled interest and relevancy of texture. If the public had been favourable at the outset, Wagner would certainly have met that public half way. He would have been content to supply them with cheaper effects in which the finer qualities of his personality would have given little evidence.

Every one knows that Wagner had the supremest conviction of the excellence of his own work, and that he was one of those rare composers who combined with the finest gifts a capacity for entering the arena effectually and fighting for its acceptance; though the significance of such activity on his own behalf is largely discounted by the fact that he was an opera composer. But for all that it remains that it was through his not getting into touch with the public till the greater part of his own work was done, and through public favour not exerting influence on his work, that it has the peculiar and special prestige of

supreme interest of facture and individuality and texture which is always absent in work which is devised merely to gratify a promiscuous public. Wagner indeed supplies one of the most striking confirmations of the fact that great work which is refused by one generation is welcomed by the generation that comes after.

But in order to get a more complete insight into the relation of the composer to the audience it is necessary to think a little of what the operations of a composer are. They are no doubt a strange and exceptional use of faculties. In the most highly and genuinely gifted of composers they must be projected in all directions with a marvellous and almost supernatural amount of activity. It is a state in which the mind is occupied with abstract thinking or generalizing or feeling of very wide range. If he is composing a symphony or an overture, he is not only conscious of the general purport of the movements or of the texture and progressions, but he feels salient passages and subjects in their relations to other parts of the work which are remote in actual distance, even before those parts are actually composed. For instance, he may feel that some particular progression or modulation would be effective in the early part of his work, that it would interest or arrest attention in itself; but he realizes that he must forgo it, because if he gives way to the temptation merely to make use of an effect for its own sake it will spoil the effect of some procedure which is inevitable in some far-off part of the work. He would weaken the effect of a later climax and make it an anticlimax. It is obviously a higher and more artistic exercise of

power to lead the mind by gradations of climaxes each increasing in intensity than to expend all the force available in a single explosion. In a work of art which is devised with the highest artistic conscientiousness a man must be frequently forgoing the full measure of effective strokes, frequently denying himself some momentary joy for the sake of the perfect presentation of a complete and logical work of art. If the interest of intelligent hearers is to be sustained, the proportionate relations of one part of a movement or work to another have to be adjusted. It is an illustration of the fact that a mind seeking the highest possible achievement must be capable of seeing or feeling a vast number of aspects of the matter in hand simultaneously. In the execution of great schemes of design which are to be justly and truly organized mere intrinsic force of expression has often to be sacrificed or compromised for the sake of wider issues. But from the big promiscuous audience's point of view such things are wasted.

There is also another way (which is specially characteristic of music) in which parts of movements which are far apart are dependent upon one another for their effect, and presuppose a capacity in the hearer for continuous and alert attention. There are countless instances in which the interest of a passage is derived from its relation to some passage which has occurred before. It is one of the most characteristic resources of musical development to make a salient passage or a subject or a part of a subject take on new significance, even to suggest a subtle change in its mood, by a variation in the melody or by an alteration of the harmony or the colour ; to make some subtle twist in a modulation which lands the mind in

a delightfully unexpected place which seems to open out some totally new point of departure and gives the sense of a new field of vitality. A very familiar and intelligible instance is the surprising turn Beethoven gives to the modulatory progression in the first subject of the *Eroica Symphony* when it comes back in what is called the "recapitulation" in the latter part of the movement. In its enunciation at the beginning of the movement it drops for a moment out of the key of E $\flat$  as if it was going to G minor, and then slides back again.



When the subject comes back again more than three hundred and fifty bars later the attentive mind remembers the first progression and experiences a sense of delighted surprise when the modulatory progression does not turn back as at first but sails away happily, not even into G minor, but into F major!





The passage is a compliment to the audience, as it assumes faculties of attention and memory, without which the stroke of genius would entirely miss its point. At a first hearing it is unlikely that more than a few choice spirits would experience the delight which the composer offered them; and the average undeveloped mind would think the passages were passages and nothing more! As a matter of fact the mere change in the progression is not all the composer achieves, for the beauty of the effect of the horn passage which follows the change is derived from the changed feeling induced by the changed progression; and what follows is also coloured by it. But in days of haste and distraction such things pass unperceived.

It is not only that few people can concentrate their attention to the necessary extent to enjoy such things, but that in modern times people often only hear part of the works presented to them. They not infrequently only come in to the concert-room when part of a work is over; so they cannot possibly tell the relation of what they hear to what they do not hear, and the composer's intention is altogether lost. The attitude of the big general audience is unfavourable to such high types of organization. The characteristic feature of democratic utterance of any kind, on the hustings or in the concert-room, is forcibleness of expression. The tendency of the demagogue is to make an impression on his audience at all costs; and with that aim he has very little care for the large issues.

Indeed he has, as a matter of fact, very little care for truth and honesty when the fit is on him. The tongue reminds him that it is an unruly member, and finding that its being unruly brings him no discredit with his audience, but rather the contrary, he cultivates the art of encouraging its effective unruliness. And this disposition is by no means confined to the demagogue of the hustings, for any one who keeps an open mind will observe that a similar tendency is observable in those who aim at attracting a large audience quickly in poetry or the so-called literature of fiction. It is notorious in the most unscrupulous phases of popular journalism; it is discernible in art which is intended to appeal to large masses, and it is most unmistakably in evidence in music.

Those who keep their ears open and observe, notice how explosive the music is which rapidly gets a vogue. How full it is of big words and the semblance of violent feeling, which is fed by the desire to get a response from all the least trustworthy promptings of ill-regulated temperament in the audience, often by the mere love of feeling excitement of some sort. But as a matter of fact the appreciation which is the result of mere excitement is not truly artistic appreciation at all. It is appreciation of something which is incidental to art without representing art in itself. A great mind may be excited by some supreme and wonderful stroke of art, but lesser minds are excited by the very things which are antagonistic to art in the higher sense. The big words and violent gesticulations impose upon the ignorant and those whose minds are undeveloped. The artistic qualities appeal

to the minds which are capable of discerning fineness of thought and skill in presentment—to those who understand. The multitude who do not understand carry all things before them for a time by weight of numbers. But in the end quality tells against quantity. The few who are intelligent and spacious minded are in a sense organized, and the masses who are not intelligent are not organized; and the effect of organization is to stand firm, and of that which is not organized to dissipate and fall to pieces.

There are some underlying principles of adjustment in such things. Men of the finer type are not so desperately eager for notoriety or applause as men of a lower type. Those whose temperament is likely to produce work of a high order prefer the endorsement of the few whose good opinion is worth having to the acclamations of the millions who have no understanding. They can go on their way independently doing what they know to be good without feeling cast down or disappointed that their names are not bruited abroad and their recreations reported in periodicals to impress those who would not understand their works.

It is not in the competence of the very big public to encourage really first-rate men in any branch of art or literature. Average minds may be brought to appreciate their work by slow degrees, but the appreciation comes too late to be of service to the producer. Where the wide contemporary audience exerts a powerful influence on art the effect is to induce a type in which lack of power of continuous attention is no drawback. It induces a kind of music which becomes intelligible by referring to something concrete outside music, whether of the programme or the rhapsodical order. The undeveloped mind, which has no

real musical intelligence, likes to be helped by being told the music represents something it can understand, even by realistic suggestion of an obvious kind. It likes music which is constantly pretty or exciting or sentimental, with the sentiment laid on heavily. It likes a sort of mosaic of nice attractive phrases of the type which happens to be fashionable and to which it is therefore accustomed; and does not care in the least if the phrases are not coherent, or even whether one is completed before another drops in to occupy its easily distracted attention. The art which is highly organized, closely knit, and finely developed is of no use to it. It requires intrinsic effects rather than the fineness of relations which are appreciated by the higher type of mind. The results are perceptible in all directions; and one of the worst of them is that the undeveloped and unstable mind is especially subject to be imposed upon, and to fall a prey to the devices of commercialism.

Commercialism inevitably ministers to that irresponsible and incoherent pursuit of superficial pleasure which is the mark of undeveloped minds. Such pursuit is ominously in evidence at the present day, especially in quarters where the influence of a leisured class is predominant. The members of the leisured classes at both ends of the social scale drift into loafing. Grown-up people lose the power of application and attention because they have nothing definite whereto to apply their minds, and they ruin their children because they think they are, monetarily, sufficiently provided for, and that therefore it is unnecessary to bore them with any serviceable kind of education; and the children grow up with the sole idea of filling



their lives with amusements. Here and there individuals find out that the results are disappointing ; that unless there is something to occupy the mind the pursuit of pleasure entails intervals of intolerable boredom, or ceaseless change which ends in sheer dissipation. Their minds do not mature and they go through life with the notion that the innocent aspirations of the golden age of childhood are sufficient for the full-grown man. The classes which are very much the reverse of leisured think that those who can live without work are fortunate in being able to amuse themselves all day long, and that whenever they have time to amuse themselves they are likeliest to succeed by following their example. The habit of pleasure-hunting becomes contagious, and the attitude of mind of the well-to-do filters down into the ranks of the ill-to-do. Music wherever it happens to come into the scheme of things becomes merely a form of superficial pleasure. The music which requires any exercise of higher faculties and could arouse genuine interest is considered tiresome. But the object of trade is to get as many buyers as possible and quick returns. Therefore commercialism must be always trying to find out what people can take pleasure in most widely and most quickly ; and to boom such things as will appeal to the largest number of superficial minds. The effect is to make minds more and more superficial, and more and more susceptible to what is cheap and specious, and more capable of being speedily hoaxed by advertisement.

So it comes about that commercialism becomes the most powerful means of degrading art. It looks for the weaknesses of careless humanity and

exploits them; and careless humanity in its millions is even enthusiastic about what it pays the commercials to hoax them with. Were it not that even some of the commercials themselves have souls above the commercial standards it would seem as if genuine art must be throttled. Though commercialism has had such disastrous effects, even in such quarters humanity reveals the persistence of higher ideals. The purely futile minds are fed full of futilities by those whose object is only to make money; but there is a residue still that understand better how life may be made worth living, and the higher type of publishers find their choice pay in the end, because what they like will go on selling while the stuff that produces quick returns presently becomes unsaleable.

The spirit of every age has many phases. At all times there are some elements of noble aspiration, of earnestness and deep feeling and honesty and mental energy, flourishing below the kaleidoscopic and bewildering phenomena of the purely surface life; and the varieties of composers have varieties of opportunity to represent different phases of the life forces of their time. The composer or artist who appeals to the highest kind of mind and temperament has a harder and harder task as time goes on. To be fully adequate he must be in touch with the loftiest and most advanced thought of his time, he must be on the crest of the wave which in his own sphere represents true progress. And this entails his steeling his heart to lack of general appreciation, and being content with the appreciation of the few. It has often been observed that the finest works of art are only produced by those who have to experience hardship, pain, and difficulty. Men even distrust the

productions of those whose lives seem too easy. There is a dim recognition of the fact that the steel of true nobility must be tempered in the fire. So the paradox seems to be suggested that where the public are too ready to be kind their too easily gained favour reacts unfavourably on the composer, and there are plenty of actual instances which confirm the idea. It seems as though it were a necessary preliminary to the higher kind of achievement for its maker to find it difficult to win appreciation.

The trivial and unintelligent crowd and the composers who supply them with what they want mutually react upon one another. But so do the choicer spirits at the other end of the scale. If there is a part of the great general audience which is always making for deterioration there is also another and a more steadfast part that is always making for betterment. It is the sympathy of the higher type of mind and temperament which feeds the higher artistic natures, and sustains them in the independent exercise of their imagination and their artistic intelligence by the higher standard of their enlightenment and vitality.

Yet people so endowed very rarely put such sympathy into words. It is only in the strata of low-class art and low-class minds and productions of every sort that men are constantly flattering and congratulating one another on their performances and their successes. Among men of higher mettle compliments which must inevitably be suspect are tabooed. The principles of the highest courtesy are understood; which are to treat the baser cravings, which are always so eagerly susceptible, as absent.

The unintelligent mind does not realize that the appeal to a low desire for flattery is the reverse of a compliment, and it is always looking for means to excite and feed such lower cravings in its acquaintances. It is one of the most familiar tokens of what is called vulgarity, and is very much in evidence in the wealthiest ranks of society. The more strenuous mind goes so much to the other extreme that friends of the higher mettle sometimes pass through life together without arriving at certainty whether the opinion of each of the other's work is favourable or the reverse.

In reality all men who think frankly admit that a man is strengthened by the necessity of being self-dependent. The man who wins popular success often forgoes his independence to keep it. The man who estimates rightly the inability of the widest contemporary public to recognize the highest in art forgoes immediate success, but maintains his independence; and the few whose minds are large enough endorse his attitude—even when they do not fully understand it themselves.

## IX

### NATIONAL INFLUENCES ON STYLE

THE general question of the influence of audiences on art has been considered. The more special question of the influence of the audiences of the various nations requires some little consideration before passing to the more intimate features of musical style in various departments.

The fact that different races have strongly marked differences of taste and talent in music is so aggressively obvious that it is almost superfluous to adduce arguments to prove it. Every one knows that Italians have a passion for vocal melody, that the German composers have out-distanced all others in instrumental music, that the French love ballet, and that the English people have a great and indomitable taste for the music of other nations. It also seems to people who think about it at all that there is an intimate connection between national character and the peculiar tastes of a nation. It is observed that a voluptuous and passionate style is favoured by a self-indulgent and sensuous people, a superficially pretty and neat style is cultivated by a gay people, a weighty and serious style by an intellectual and strenuous people, a placid style by a complacent and reticent people, a blatant style by a vain and egoistic

people, and an eccentric and angular style by a capricious and spasmodically energetic people. One may go so far as to suggest that wherever the taste of a people or a section of a people is strongly manifested in the characteristics of their music, it infallibly points to certain corresponding qualities of disposition.

The reasons for and sources of national characteristics are profoundly interesting subjects, but it is obvious that their consideration would be out of place here except in so far as the reasons also apply to the characteristics of the music connected with them. But it seems advisable also to suggest the dangers which are entailed by too hasty generalization. The attractiveness of theories of heredity is shown by the manner in which it pervades recent fiction, from the colossal Rougon Macquart series to the little chapter of slum life in a daily paper. But it is not quite so simple as it looks. As Weismann pointed out long ago, in the course of ten generations we accumulate 1024 direct ancestors, and this supplies a man with a very fair opportunity to escape the virtues or vices of any particularly conspicuous individual, to weaken hereditary predispositions, and to enable that great counterpoise, habit, to assert itself. Habit is indeed the most hopeful check to hereditary influences, and is quite as likely to be responsible for excellences and vices as heredity. No doubt characteristic habits are formed under the influence of hereditary predispositions, but there must be copious instances where habits formed under strong surrounding influences quite counterbalance the peculiarities of life and conduct which come from heredity. It is sufficient to refer to the familiar

description of Saxons who went to Ireland, that they became more Irish than the Irish themselves, and to recall that the same has been said of people who migrated to France. Habits are obviously infectious, and easily contracted from the social surroundings and the prevailing attitude of mind of a locality.

So before assuming heredity as a source of national taste it is wise to consider what the nature of its true influence is. Moreover, it is wise to remember, when thinking of national characteristics in music, that nations are mainly geographical units. And when talking of French or German or Italian music we are speaking of the music of very mixed races; and though in many cases there may be a predominant partner, it sometimes happens that a race numerically inferior takes the lead in such a specialty as musical taste. Again, there are many other perplexing things to consider. Nations sometimes present conspicuous differences of behaviour and even of character at different periods of their existence. The English of the gross Hanoverian time of Tom Jones or Humphrey Clinker or Roderick Random present such a different aspect from those of the Elizabethan time that a stranger coming from another planet, who could by any means see the two together at once, might easily be deceived into thinking they were not the same people. Neither can we easily set aside such a phenomenon as the Teutons of the eighteenth century being entirely submerged by Italian opera; though we may observe that it was a passing phase in which the people seemed to belie themselves in obedience to the foolish fashions of their small courts—and we also remember that there was one John Sebastian Bach living the while; little regarded, it

is true, but building up in an imperishable manner a mass of musical realities which are among the greatest glories of the Teutonic race. Again, we have to remember that the foundations of one of the most important types of French art were copiously and substantially laid by the Italian Lulli; and that a still more composite paradox presents itself, when we see the German Handel pouring out Italian operas one after another for the English people.

There are many puzzles of this kind, which should serve as a warning not to rush to conclusions too confidently. But, all the same, the fact remains that when any people have strongly marked characteristics and any aptitude for musical expression, their music bespeaks them more truly than any other manifestation of the mind of man. Indeed, the fact that musical insight is so little developed, and that people do not realize the difference between what is fine and what is base, prevents their misrepresenting themselves in it. And, moreover, when they do give eager encouragement to any music which is manifestly at variance with their own temperamental scheme, the misrepresentation is more apparent than real, for the music must represent them secondarily if not primarily. That is to say, the great audience of the nation, which is ultimately responsible for what the music of the nation shall be, may fervently take up the direct product of the nation's musical instinct, the phraseology and the form of musical thought which are the outcome of the more essential characteristics of the nation; but it may also encourage the products of nations utterly different from itself in every respect, out of curiosity, interest in strange phenomena, or opportunities of encouraging foreigners



to supply special kinds of art for which some of its members have a disorderly craving, but would feel shy of supplying for themselves. The English people are obviously most voracious of music which is not their own, and only of their own music when it is imitated from that of some other nation, and often thoroughly at variance with their character. But it cannot be pretended that the music they cause to flourish by their patronage does not in a secondary sense represent them. It represents their singular instinct for annexing everything, also their really energetic cosmopolitanism, and the fact that though they live on an island they are the least insular people in the world. Their pride in achieving material results which they judge to be practical realities, and looking askance on such things as music (the practical utility of which is not so immediately apparent), seems to lead to their thinking that such moderately remunerative labour may as well be left to foreigners. The result must of course be admitted, that there is hardly any nation worse supplied with music which represents its true characteristics than the English.

But it cannot be denied that there is a kind of art which represents English people. All the Elizabethan and early Jacobean music, whether choral or instrumental, has a national and consistent flavour—whether it is the severe dignity of Tallis or the kindly subtlety of Byrd, the nobility and warmth of Orlando Gibbons, the geniality and humour of Morley, the tender sweetness of Dowland, the fantastic ingenuity of John Bull, it always rings true, and it is the direct outcome of the national temperament. It has the same ring as the primitive English folk-music; and its salient characteristics are simplicity

and unaffected tunefulness. It is in a sense most characteristic by what it excludes. Passionate violence of intervals or rhythm or accents are unknown to it. The temperamental representatives are all scanty; what there is of temperamental is rather generally diffused than vehemently asserted. And all this assuredly is quite in accordance with the national character.

Another very characteristic phase of directly representative English music is that of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Henry and William Lawes led up to it and Pelham Humphrey and Lock carried it onward till it arrived at the new phase in which Purcell, and afterwards Arne, achieved the most nationally representative music of any period or any composer. But in this case it is a different phase of national character which is represented. It is scarcely more immediately temperamental than the music of the Elizabethans, but it is much more aggressive, more angular, more objective and analytical. As far as tunefulness is concerned there is no doubt that the products are splendidly representative of vigour, healthiness, and frankness. The tunes hold up their heads proudly. No morbid questionings or futile complaints upon the hardship of our lot! but a good hearty courage to face things, come what will; and at the same time great quasi-literary instinct, and power of dramatic expression and analysis—not power of temperamental presentation, nor warmth. It is not altogether amiable or attractive. Foreigners as a rule do not like the English character; it seems cold and lacking in temperamental manifestations. And the true English music is totally unsympathetic to them for the same reasons. Hence the direct

contribution of the English people to the general material of music—the *Materia Musica*—is comparatively small.

The influence of the English character is possibly to be found in the style of Handel's finest oratorio choruses, especially the descriptive ones—and the vast array of choral works of later times which have followed the Handelian models. And it is conceivable that Handel himself was directly influenced in developing his highly composite style, by the choral music of true English model which he may have heard in his long stay in this country. For it must be remembered that Handel was of all things an impresario watching his public with the eye of genius, and adapting his works to their more obvious tastes. If he had gone to China he would probably have written Chinese music for the Chinese, or whatever was the equivalent of the music in vogue among the fashionable classes in London in his time. It is notable also that the most permanent effect was produced by that part of his work which represented the taste of the English public most genuinely and widely. The enormous mass of his operatic works in the Italian style represent the taste of a purely capricious class, in one of its most capricious phases. And though there is a lot of fine music in them the operas serve for little more than to point an unpleasant moral, and had next to no influence at all on the general development of style, and occupy no place in the story of musical evolution. Whereas in the oratorio and in secular odes Handel was guided by the taste of a wide and genuinely English audience, and the effect of their influence was to make the composer use his

powers to great purpose and provide types of style which affected the future course of art's evolution profoundly, mainly in the direction of choral work, but also in the direction of declamatory solo work, which not infrequently had a decided English character.

In such cases the English might be said to have been employing foreigners to express their ideas either because they thought it beneath them to concern themselves with such work, or because they had not the aptitude to express themselves so well. They have always had the instinct for getting the best that is to be had in matters artistic from wherever it is to be had, unrestrictive of nation and irrespective of the effects so urgently associated with the word "dumping" by the municipal-bred politician. The acceptance of the services of foreigners may have the effect of representing a nation's ideas directly—as in the case of the native ponchos of the Araucans and Guasos of Chile which are made in England though they cannot be purchased there—or they may illustrate what may be called secondary or indirect influences, when they accept and further the establishment of purely and really foreign products, which are foreign in style and material; like the taste of the Zulu of old times, who had a positive dislike to being hampered with clothes in general, but took a passionate pride in appearing in public in a tall hat.

The influence which this country has exercised on the general trend of art by its enthusiastic acceptance of Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms illustrates the national solidity and respectability in matters of taste in a secondary

degree. Handel's work represented them primarily and directly. He illustrated an adaptation of a familiar adage, "*Qui facit per alienum facit per se.*" With the sympathetic leading of the English public he established the style which came to be recognized as English in the succeeding generations; thereby inducing the misfortune that in later times when any work ventured to present a really English character it was always described as Handelian. Yet Handel certainly did not invent the style. It became his by adoption only, and he left the impress of his genius upon it. It had been there before him, as Orlando Gibbons and Purcell and a few others demonstrate to us; and it could continue to be independent of him, as can be observed in many of Arne's characteristic tunes.

When we come to the consideration of French influence on style we are dealing with a less abstruse situation, for the French have not such an innate predisposition to favour the works of other nations, and in some ways the qualities and features of the music which represents their habit of mind towards art have been strangely distinct and consistent.

We must at the outset admit that the French are a very composite nation. A famous French bishop said to a venturesome author, who was at work on a book on France, that he might as well write about a kaleidoscope. But all the same, though there may be varieties in detail, their main influence upon music in general has up till comparatively recent times been all generated in one quarter, and represents the taste of Paris. France had a line of her own even in the days when the modern dispensation was just beginning. She was not prominent in the great days of choral music, nor did she seem to shine in the

expression of devotion. The essentially French idea of music seems to have found its expression, from the first, in music in some way connected with the theatre. In the days when the court loomed larger than in any other country it was always masquerades which required the services of the composer; and, oddly enough, though France had such supremely great dramatists, music was not called upon to express great dramatic situations, or emotional crises, but always to serve for the lighter part of the dance music, and the daintiness of little trifling songs. Whenever the music provided for French functions can be found it seems mainly to consist of tunes for ballets, and gay and neat vocal music. So it is in the fifteenth-century music for the masquerades, and so it is when examples become more copious in the seventeenth century. The masquerades were, in fact, little more than elaborate ballets with vocal music interposed—very artificial types of theatrical entertainment in which the kings and the nobles took part. The scheme of Lully's operas was a development of these ballets, and even the most serious of them are full of ballets; Charpentier, when he tried to play the revolutionary in operatic methods, still had to fill his works with ballets. Rameau had to do the same. And even Gluck, with his exalted ideas, had to make that same concession to French taste and find excuses for ballet in the situations of his plays. And the same foible has persisted throughout the history of the French; not yet time to say almost. It is so obvious that the estimate of style where. superfluous. shown in the neat which.

The same predisposition is shown in the neat which. If we look to French in

in an early phase was of considerable importance, we find the *Ordres* or *Suites* of Couperin, who for his pre-eminence was called *François le Grand*, to be little-disguised imitations of ballets. The earlier part of each suite is always of a serious cast, but it is always followed by a number of little movements with fancy names obviously imitated from ballets. Rameau's dainty little harpsichord pieces have precisely the same aspect. The idea of purely abstract art, of the development of large works upon copious artistic principles, has seemed as alien to French disposition as the expression of deep feeling. Whether it is from habit of mind or innate peculiarities of disposition, the French have always seemed to regard music as the minister of gaiety. Its two essential requirements with them are rhythm and dexterity of presentation. The latter is manifest even in much of their folk-music, and very conspicuous in their songs, and in later times in their management of orchestral effect. They seem disposed to regard manner as of almost more consequence than matter, and in music at all events they look askance at serious subjects because they may tend to weightiness. The unforgivable thing is to bore, and if art is looked upon as a minister to gaiety, the moment it becomes serious boredom is in dangerous proximity.

It seems almost superfluous to point out that the variety of French musical art till recently has been extreme, as cited. Till the last century their most cosmopolitan in one quarter had been Couperin and Rameau. France had a listalain; and the connection of their the modern es with dances devised for the th she was not prrred to above. And when Berlio al music, nor did in reality a vividly self-

conscious producer of extravagantly glorified ballets. The evolution has been consistent. For it is not enough to say that French composers mainly confined themselves to expressing some sort of programme in music, for the programme is always treated in its connection with the theatre, or in forms of ballet movements which were devised for it, and not that only but in its ballet phase. And if their scheme be turned round and looked at the reverse way we should find that a very large part of the texture of the accompaniments to the vocal portions of their operas is based on devices derived from dance music.

But this somewhat exclusive predisposition is not necessarily a misfortune. For it so happens that among the nations which have taken a prominent part in modern civilization no other race has shown a decisive leaning towards rhythm; and consequently it is of service that the French should have been so faithful, and should have maintained, possibly without being aware of it, the just claims of dance rhythms of all kinds to a prominent place in the scheme of music. Beyond that we must of course welcome the fact that even in things trivial the French insist upon dexterity of presentment; upon something which gives the impression of cleverness in the scheme or the texture, of the liveliness of their intelligibility. It is the artistic parallel to the habit of mind which glorifies skill in conversation, which is probably a survival of habit formed in the courts of Louis XIV. and Louis XV.

Of what the French may do in the new phase of their musical ardour it is not yet time to predict. Their dexterity in dealing with the orchestra is part of that same exaggerated estimate of style which has been discussed, and is shown in the neatness of



their earlier song music as well as in the ingenious perversity of their latest developments in that line, wherein the reiteration of little formulas of accompaniment indicates a reversion towards primitive mental phases, which have been discussed in connection with the music of undeveloped races. Their tendency to cultivate sensibility is also bearing very conspicuous fruit; and it is to be observed that the phase in which it is now manifested was preceded by a period of excessive sensuousness in the middle of the nineteenth century, which had considerable influence upon art in other countries, as, for instance, on the church music of this country; and this singular effect is all the more noteworthy because the French have been always the most uncompromising secularists of all musical nations.

The musical trend of the Italians was very different, but seems not less distinct and invariable. Even in the great choral days their music was distinguishable by purely sensuous beauty (of an exalted kind, it is true) from the works of composers of the northern races. When the music of our modern dispensation began the same predisposition was shown in their delight in producing solo vocal music, which appealed through its lending itself to opportunities of displaying the human voice in its most attractive aspects. Their glorification of the human voice precluded their having much feeling for rhythm; for melody and rhythm are primarily almost opposite forms of musical expression, and have only been fused through the evolution of pure instrumental music. The Italians are indeed manifestly the great promoters of melodious music in and for itself, and the fact is illustrated by their exclusive preference for violin

music in the instrumental province of art in the seventeenth century. But no doubt they have been more than that. Their love of beauty is shown also in their delight in pure elegance and simple conclusiveness of design; and the devoted attention they have bestowed on design, altogether without regard to contents, has been of great service to the art. It was they who patiently established the principles of harmonic form so called; in other words, the principles of the relations of tonic and dominant and of the relations of keys as a means of design. Their childish delight in simple successions of harmony and key which satisfied elementary cravings is shown in the hundreds of thousands of empty operas upon which they gloated for fully a century, which have no intrinsic musical interest whatever beyond being slight variations of the simplest type of form. And this elementary unsophisticated pleasure in mere design caused them to hammer out with infinite pains and real devotion the types of the essentially classical forms. It is no small merit indeed to have contrived the scheme of art which served for the principles of organization of Haydn's, Mozart's, and Beethoven's symphonies—and even for the greater part of the finest chamber music in existence.

But the tragic fact is often referred to that though the Italians laid the foundations of all the most important forms of modern art—and though they even worked out the most practicable schemes of design and not a little of the phraseology—they never had the good luck to produce any of the greatest examples in the highest types of art. Other nations took over their preparatory work and clothed

it with the warmth of human interest and intrinsic individuality which made the results of permanent value. For, great as their natural artistic outfit is, greater than that of any other nation, it is always in the intrinsic qualities of the ideas themselves that the Italians have failed. They have always been too easily satisfied with merely mechanical and conventional solutions of elementary artistic problems, and have not had the patience or the persistence to follow them up and solve the difficult business of applying them to higher purposes. This is illustrated not only in the strictness and regularity of the so-called classical forms of the sonata order, and in the childish reiteration of certain types of showy and absolutely vapid cadences in the operatic arias, but also in the multitude of purely conventional formulas of accompaniment, which merely solve the elementary problems of style sufficiently to satisfy a not very intelligent mind, and have neither appositeness nor character, and from the highest point of view are little better than plausible makeshifts.

The result in general is that the Italian qualities and contributions to the *Materia Musica* are <sup>the</sup> fruit of their purely artistic predispositions. The art and what the art can supply of itself is all-sufficient for them, and in relation to music at least their habit of mind has been unfavourable to the association of music with human interest. They have brought about various crises in the history of opera solely by ignoring language and dramatic truth and human feeling, and treating them as of indifferent importance compared with the supreme joy which simple schemes of form, slightly adorned with decorative futilities, brought to their innocent minds. The big audience

of the centuries in Italy has even at times resented that human nature should obtrude itself into the province of art. True it is, they created that grotesque human formula the *prima donna*, and worshipped their own image often grossly bedizened, but that was practically the extent of the amount of human interest which they allowed to be mixed up with their idea of musical art. But of the obligations of music to the Italians there can be no question. All great composers of other nations have been indebted to them; for principles of form, types of phraseology, standards of purely beautiful effects of tone and outline, and the initiative in all branches of modern art. But the power of strenuous persistence in climbing up the steep ascent of art to higher things was not for them, but for a race whose musical story is the very strongest contrast to theirs, and illustrates the persistent and patient and unweariable devotion to an ideal which was totally different throughout.

The contrast is indeed very striking. For the Germans, judging by the lateness with which they came into the field, had less natural aptitude for music than other nations. It throws light on their attitude towards music and the causes of their success that they did not come to the art out of love for it for itself, but under the inspiring influences of their religious reforming ardour. Music came in as the expression of their ardour in the chorales; and much of its early development was closely connected with these symbols of their deepest feelings, both in the church cantatas and in that most characteristic form the choral-vorspiel. It was not only uncongenial to them to express themselves in formal

schemes like the Italians—the general aspect of the characteristics of German music seems to imply that their impulse felt such procedure cramping to their independent and aspiring spirit. Even in such an early phase as Heinrich Schütz's sacred symphonies for voices, and Psalms and Passions, the type of procedure is indefinite and the impulse is evidently to adopt forms which are suggested by the subject and the words. It is notable that in most cases when Germans adopted Italian methods of procedure the result has an un-German effect. For example, when the composers who followed Heinrich Schütz resorted to Italian models, as if in bewilderment about the problems of musical organization, instantly the level of their musical utterances fell. Hammerschmidt, Ahle, and Pachelbel, though they attained to a higher standard of mere craftsmanship than Schütz, were inferior to him in intrinsic interest in all the points which show a preponderance of Italian influence. And this is the case throughout the history. The southern German organists who were affected by the formalism of the Italian school dwindled to nothing, while the northern organists grew more and more interesting in proportion as they strengthened the purely Teutonic element in their work. And the conspicuous rarity of anything suggesting the formalities of the sonata type in the works of J. S. Bach is accounted for by the fact that he was out and out Teutonic, and expressed completely the real instincts of the race. The preponderance of the fugal type in his work is notorious, and the reason of it is that it is so extremely elastic and continuous. It is noteworthy also that J. S. Bach was enabled to use it for such an infinite

variety of musical effect because he ignored almost absolutely the favourite regulations which the theorists laid down as necessary for a properly constructed fugue. And in this also he illustrated the Teutonic instinct; for it was because he employed the form for genuinely expressive purposes, instead of following the formal directions of theorists for the making of technical puzzles, that he succeeded so marvellously. And his greatest achievements are either those in which his romantic spirit is most conspicuous, or those in which he interpreted in music words which moved him profoundly.

If we pass on to Gluck's protests against the Italian opera, what are they but protests against the formalities which obstructed the true expression of human feelings? And he is always at his best when the Italian traces of formality are rarest. Beethoven must be admitted to have worked on an Italian foundation. But the essence of his position is that absolute music in his hands became deeply tintured with human and temperamental qualities. He seemed at the time to outrage the canons of taste of those who held most rigidly and fervently to the Italian traditions, and he speaks most to those who have sympathy with the romantic phase of art. He speaks not merely in terms of absolute music, but absolute music plus something essentially human. Indeed his later works show complete severance from the Italian classical formalities, and the victory of the Teuton in him through the adoption of the continuous form of the fugue as more apt to express his aspirations, and the "variation" form which maintains the unity of the single idea in various disguises. And the instinct showed itself more and

more decisively as Schubert and Schumann poured out their songs, as Brahms gave the world his *Schicksalslied* and *Deutsches Requiem*, and as Wagner unfolded the immense scheme of his music dramas.

The effect of the Teutonic instinct is to bring music into touch with realities, to express something which is human, to add immeasurably to the power of great thoughts, and to stir noble emotions. Not to leave the being merely in a pleasant state of indefinite exaltation by abstract beauty and abstract ideas, but to make men feel what is eloquent enhanced by an eloquence which transcends mere speech. To give men trembling on the verge of materialism a new revelation of spiritual possibilities, and extinguish pessimism by giving a new meaning to life. A detail will illustrate it. Wagner perhaps hardly realized the full significance of his *Leitmotive*. They were indeed not a device consciously adopted, but coming, like all evolutionary ideas, in the natural sequence of expansion. But when they arrived they were found to be a different order of ideas from the old classical subjects. The old subjects were long systematically formed sentences akin to the spaced-out melodies of vocal music. The new kind of subject is sometimes little more than an ejaculation. There is no necessity that it shall be on any particular model of any particular number of bars or defined by a cadence. It is such a musical utterance as expresses something; a unity which can grow and expand. And it is this type of idea which is becoming the kernel of Teutonic instrumental music, as well as a conspicuous musical feature of the opera. And upon its manipulation German instrumental music of the future, as well

as its possible choral and dramatic music, will be founded. But it would be a mistake to suppose the feature was new. Beethoven gives ample examples. Even his subjects cast in the old-fashioned modes are full of pregnant features—and his use of these pregnant features in the “working-out” part of his movements prefigured the type of later procedure.

The implication of the contrast between the Italian ideal and the Teutonic ideal, in widest significance, is that classicism is the contribution of the southern races—probably in their Latin aspect—based on their instinct for laying hold of what seem to be certitudes and clinging to them; and that the romanticism of the northern races is the product of the instinct for progress, for the expansion of the human mind, rebelling against formalities of every kind, and striving eagerly forward after strange ideals, and recognizing that the necessary condition of all life is change.

The aims of the Italians in abstract beauty arrived at the futilities of the Italian fashionable opera of the seventeenth century. The aspiring humanity of the Germans arrives at the deep mysticism of Brahms and the dramatic intensity of Wagner, and impresses even the Italian mind with new recognitions of the claims of humanity. Like Haydn learning from Mozart, the Italians are now learning their own art anew from the Germans.

But it seems that the Germans themselves, as well as composers of other nations, are now becoming liable to be learning from other races. The Slavs and the Czechs have always been known to be deeply impressionable to music, and they have of late been adopting the forms and artistic methods built up by the more



developed races, and producing music which is exceptionally full of warmth of feeling and colour, and very skilfully made. But they have come into the range of the higher kinds of art too recently for their racial influences to be discussed on the same footing as those of peoples who have been developing their types of art for centuries. Their influence is already apparent in the increasing fervour and vehemence and high colouring of latter-day art. But the more reticent and self-controlled races can only safely adopt the style and material of semi-developed and partially Oriental races with critical circumspection. The temperamental qualities of such races may be wonderfully interesting in their own sphere, but out of gear with those whom long processes of intellectual development have brought to a more practical control and adjustment of the vagaries of primitive instinct.

## X

### TEXTURE

#### I

It does not require much strenuous thinking to realize the great possibilities of difference between inspiration and accomplishment, between the idea which the artist or musician wants to put into an artistic form and the execution of it. The world mainly concurs in attributing the inspiration to spiritual impulses, and the execution to the artistic skill, or musicianship, or mastery of artistic resource and method. And this mastery and musicianship are mainly manifested in what we may call for the nonce the texture of the work of art.

It surely is one of the inevitable feelings even of an ingenuous infant who endeavours to express himself in artistic fashion, that everything he puts into his work must have some meaning and purpose, what the expounder of art would call a function. Till the man outside art comes by and philosophizes it would not occur to the artist to fill up a puzzling corner of his picture with pointless paint, or to the composer to admit a lot of mere noises with no meaning at all into parts of a symphony he did not know what to do with. It would (until the children of

this world came to teach the world's wisdom) feel like dishonesty, and he would be ashamed of it. In the unsophisticated state the human creature thinks that there is no part of a work of art that has not some purpose in its relation to the whole. Though the duty be ever so humble, to be part of a work of art creates responsibility. And one of the subtlest of artistic difficulties is rightly to estimate the degrees of such responsibility. Indeed there is nothing which shows the skill of a composer more than the parts of his compositions which the average public regard as of no importance. It is very easy to write a tune, and it is not difficult to put a bass to it, but what to do with the inside, which seems to count for so little, is one of the most importunate perplexities which besets the man who has any sense of artistic responsibility. One may go further and say also that there is no surer index of his disposition and attitude in respect of art than the fashion in which he solves this subordinate problem; and the tendency of some races to treat the matter in a slovenly and indolent fashion, and of others with energy and unrelaxed attention, illustrates fundamental traits of disposition.

The perplexity is by no means confined to music, as painters seem to have just the same question perpetually haunting them. The dashing first sketch which indicates the design and colour and general purport of what is intended to be a great work of art is much like the treble and bass, and the few indications of salient points which indicate the scheme of a great composition. Every one has great inspirations, and is ready to soar into the empyrean; it is the necessity of providing for mundane conditions which so often spoils the heavenward flight. The

little details are so importunate, and will not be ignored.

The attitude towards them indicates two different types of artists or composers. There is on one side the painter who paints to glorify what he himself delights in, whose spur is from within, the composer who delights in the skilful use of musical phraseology and deftly finished artistic points; there is on the other side the gifted artist or composer who denies himself some of the delight of exercising his powers out of respect for a public who might not quite see eye to eye with him in the matter. He wastes no time in a labour of love, or in dwelling on what mainly concerns himself; the interests of others must be respected. It may be more summarily said that there are on the one side the men who really paint or compose to please or satisfy their own artistic instincts, for the very delight of it, and on the other those who paint or compose to give other people pleasure. In the first category we find the laborious, the conscientious, the petty, the tedious, the silly sticklers for trifles, all manners of types who are exasperating; on the other the men of enterprise, of large conceptions, the apostles of progress and inspiration,

Who stepping there, with face towards the sun,  
Stop seldom to pluck weeds or ask their names.

The more the pity! For all the faithfulness and truth, all the beautiful qualities of disposition and of purpose are on the side of those who paint and compose to please themselves, and all the shams and make-ups and frauds and impostures are on the side of those who paint and compose to please other

people. As far as the story of art's development goes the first position is the elementary and primitive one, the second comes after men have eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good, and also of evil. When men painted to please themselves they dwelt with delight upon every little stone and flower and leaf and branch, upon every jewel and button; upon every little vein and wrinkle, upon the curl of an individual hair or the shadow of an eyelash. The growth of mastery and its exercise gave the sense of joy. But all of a sudden they became aware that they were not working solely for themselves. Perhaps they got tired of pleasing themselves, and, like people surfeited with self-indulgence, endeavoured to revive their jaded appetites by trying to please others. The elaborate labour spent upon detail seemed superfluous; and they began to summarize and merely suggest minor things comprehensively. The texture became in a sense broader and more simple and better adapted to the receptivities of others; while it also recognized the shortness of human life and the chance of producing more works of art in a limited time.

No doubt it is just and right to regard art in its relation to the public, and it is reasonable to philosophize upon what can be seen and what cannot, upon what can be heard and what cannot. Great painters and great composers have been found on the side of the servants of the public, as well as among those who unblushingly reject the claims of those exacting patrons. But ever so little a preponderance of consciousness or impulse in one direction or the other leads to amazingly different results. The facts of experience supply us with evidence that the effect is the same in both arts. When the painters began

to paint with preponderating consciousness of the public, great sweeps of the brush soon took the place of the faithful presentation of details which the artist loved; with results that we all know. At first a splendid outburst of grand conceptions grandly executed, which lasted as long as the consciousness of the details summarized lasted; and then deterioration into histrionic impostures which marked the end of the greatest period of art among the people who had the greatest natural endowment of any race that ever appeared in the world. Their endowment was greater than that of the ancients because they coupled the possession of wonderful musical gifts with their artistic gifts in other directions. And the story of their music was the same as that of their painting. Up to a certain point they developed their art in a self-regardant sense, inasmuch as the texture of their work was made perfect in every detail from their own highly organized point of view. And when they had arrived at a wonderful pitch of mastery in this respect, suddenly the new attitude of mind suggested itself. At first there were some surprising results, but very soon composers began to daub as painters did; to try to summarize as they did; to use conventional formulas which were everybody's property, to try to see through other people's eyes and hear with other people's ears; and so in the end they arrived at the period of shoddiness and shams and make-believes; and splendid promise went weltering down into a quagmire from which only occasional efforts, such as those of the heroic aged Verdi, seem to be able to emerge.

Thus the familiar old saying, "If you take care of the pence the pounds will take care of themselves,"

seems to be quaintly vindicated in connection with art. Of course we know that it is not all-sufficiently true. But it is true that those who ignore the claims of the minute trifles will find that their legions will amply revenge themselves. The course of the revenge is simple and obvious. The rare great impressionist may be a master of the technique of detail, and faithfully summarize; but those who imitate him soon cease to summarize, and only smudge. They lose the sense of the minutiae out of which the great things are made up, and also the power to represent them either in summary or in detail. The very tradition of the way to dispose of them without interfering with the great features of a picture or a design melts away, and the aim of the artist comes to be to conceal his artistic incapacity.

But in truth and fairness it must be acknowledged that neither position is completely adequate by itself. There is a great difference between imposing on the public by a histrionic sham and recognizing their needs. To insist overmuch on some little trait of personal skill in trifles is as futile as "throwing a paint-brush in the face of the public and calling it art." Moreover, the higher type of artist and composer is restive if he has the feeling that his powers serve mainly for his own gratification. However great his sense of beauty and his power of glorifying even common things, he is bound by the sense of responsibility towards his fellow-creatures to restrain the exercise of his powers in directions which would inevitably be barren, except for his own pleasure, owing to the limitations of the public mind. The fine and deeply-rooted instinct of service, which is the constant attendant of high qualities in man,

prevails over the self-regardant impulse, and makes him endeavour to accommodate his personal impulses and powers to the service of his fellow-men, and so to realize in the highest sense the principle of artistic economy.

The logical solution of the problem and the perfect adjustment of conflicting principles is found when the composer instinctively feels the public so far as to make sure both of their abilities and their disabilities; so that he may convey his own personal artistic message in terms which they can understand. His own personal responsibility is not lessened. He has no justification for existence if he does not see things in some light or aspect which other people do not see; and his business is to find the terms that will enable others to understand him and thereby to widen and enrich the sum of human experience. Artistic technique, which is expressed in texture, is developed as a means of communication between the composer or the painter and the æsthetic receptivities of the public.

In early days of musical art the perplexities of texture hardly presented themselves. An elementary parallel will illustrate the difference between the position of the composer of choral music of the early times and a modern composer. In an ordinary song the average composer of to-day thinks his principal obligation is to produce a pleasant and appropriate melody. If he has any genuine artistic instinct he is inevitably exercised about the question of how to deal with his accompaniment—how just to give it sufficient point and genuineness of artistic texture without overburdening so delicate an organization. But the old composers were not vexed with any such problem. They did not recognize the tune at the



top as in any way desirable. Instead of putting something at the top and building under it, they put something which they called a *Canto fermo* in the middle and built round it. The *Canto fermo* had no particular significance beyond its being something to build round, and all the parts being developed on an equality the texture was uniform throughout; and the most perfect texture was that in which all the parts were equally full of life and their relation towards one another perfectly balanced. And this kind of texture was maintained in all the kinds of art which were carried out contrapuntally.

The fact that the basis of the work of art was the relation of melodic lines to one another precluded the question's arising, what to do with any subordinate points in the work of art, because there were none. This continued to be the case even in instrumental forms of art, which were carried out freely on contrapuntal principles. The artistic texture of a fugue was assured by the very nature of its construction. Each part, as it was called, had its complete individual life and its inevitable relation to its fellow-parts. And when the human mind set aside this essential, and endeavoured to write fugues on the lines of the sonata and to introduce passages which merely represented successions of harmony, the hybrid product betrayed its insufficiency; for the moment the strands of a fugue show inequality of vitality, our instinct tells us that the thing is not genuine. The texture is not that of a true fugue, and its calling itself one is mere pretence. It was one of Bach's great services to art that he instinctively defined the necessary scheme of texture which gave assurance of equal vitality in every detail of artistic organization in contrapuntal

types of art. The true inwardness of Bach's connection with the great early choral composers, such as Palestrina and Lasso, Vittoria and Byrd and Gibbons, lies in the texture of his work, that is, in the manner in which the strands are interwoven. The strands are much more richly interwoven, it is true, and they are in themselves much more full of varied vitality. But the principles on which the texture is produced are the same. The basis of his scheme of art is the combination of melodic lines, and the principle pervades nearly all his work from end to end, and it was thus a decisive solvent of perplexities which appear in far other guises to the modern composer.

How deeply this was ingrained in him is shown in an enlightening fashion in the solo movements in his cantatas and in the Passions and the *B minor Mass*, wherein he does not treat his accompaniment as a modern composer would treat his orchestra, but often singles out special instruments, generally solo wind instruments, and makes them play all the way through a movement on an equality with the solo voice, and very often the same passages. So that the usual aspect of a solo with him was in truth a trio or a quartet consisting of voice and instruments; or, in other words, combination of lines of different colours and properties. There was, indeed, no special preference between the vocal line and the instrumental lines, as any one would remember who had heard a great violinist like Joachim play the solo violin part in the accompaniment of the wonderful contralto air "Erbarme dich, mein Gott" in the *Matthäus Passion*, or had even heard first-rate performers play the bassoon and horn parts in the "Quoniam" in the *B minor Mass*. The

æsthetic conception is, in such a case, that the human voice formulates the words with appropriate melodic inflections, constituting one line, and that the accompanying instruments have lines of their own which in the manner most suitable to their style supply an additional element of expression, which at the same time satisfies the requirements of artistic texture. Yet as a manner of settling these requirements Bach's method cannot be said to be all-sufficing; and its defects are shown in many cases, especially in his arias for a tenor voice, which are almost impracticable because of the remorselessness with which he carried out his polyphonic scheme. And this is one of the rare cases in which no modern composer would endeavour to follow out his methods, which are recognized as a speciality of his own artistic personality, which he alone at times could make deeply impressive. The true solution must realize the balance of subordination in proportion to the importance of the factors of the art-work at any moment.

On the other hand, there was clearly present in Bach's mind the value of a great number of lines as a means of enriching the texture. Composers had indeed been aware of it for centuries before Bach's time. They knew that four parts were sufficient to fill adequately the measure of completeness of sound; but they delighted in writing for five, six, seven, and eight voices, and even sometimes more, because the texture thereby became richer and more interesting.

Bach was completely alive to the fact, and no one ever attained even approximately to his supreme power of threading many parts together so as to give the effect of an almost incredible richness of texture

—as in his great eight-part motets, and some of the choruses in the *B minor Mass*. But with him there is also recognition of another phase of texture which he carried to a unique extreme. For texture is not only rich on account of the number of strands interwoven, but also on account of the intrinsic qualities of the lines themselves. It does not necessarily follow because a work is in many parts that the texture will be rich. There are plenty of pretentious movements by Italian composers just before Bach's time which make great show of importance on the ground of being in eight parts and more. But the texture is merely dull and flabby because the lines of the vocal parts have no intrinsic vitality whatever. They stand still as often as they can, or make pointless and conventional progressions between the essential notes of successions of simple and obvious harmonies. Bach so fully understood the virtue of vitality in the individual strands that he could make two or three parts produce the effect of the richest texture by the manner in which he vitalized them with rapid notes, passing notes, runs, appoggiaturas, and all the panoply of ornament superimposed on the essential notes of the melodic lines of the polyphony. There are many preludes and other movements for the clavier, really only in two parts, which are so managed as to induce quite as rich an effect as other composers could obtain from five or six parts; and this, be it observed in parenthesis, is illustrated by Domenico Scarlatti as well as Bach. Indeed the idea of making parts so vivaciously independent had never occurred to any composer before; and it is no wild surmise that Bach was driven to become the most

ornamental composer who ever lived because of the limitations of the principles on which the problems of texture could then be solved. The older composers had been content to make the texture of their works out of the essential notes of the combined melodies, which gave it the effect of simplicity and strength. Bach by copious use of ornaments was able to convey the impression of an infinity of interlacing lines, with little knots and curls and curves, and all sorts of dazzling effects of detail comparable to the effect of profusion which sometimes appears in Albert Dürer's engravings.

Such effects are obtained in a vast number of choruses in the cantatas, and such familiar examples as the "Cum Sancto Spiritu" chorus in the *B minor Mass*—but also in a surprising degree in many of the solo movements. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that in many of the cantatas when he was pressed for time, and did not feel inspired by the words or was out of humour, he resorted to his supreme gift for the contrivance of rich texture as a sufficiency of artistic effect, and a justification for presenting the work as representing himself. And it is in this sense, as before said, that many of the solos are almost impracticable—because he regarded the solo voice as a mere item in the texture, and allotted to it such terribly exacting and difficult ornamental passages as to make the efforts of the soloist to cope with them painful to witness. It is difficult to imagine all the details of works of art being made more full of interest or more skilfully manipulated. And, moreover, he added to the mere richness of texture the interest and the consistency derived from making the strands themselves out of phrases and variations of thematic

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material. This indeed he did more especially in his fugues and movements of the fugal order; in which the various parts are often mainly made up of the subjects, counter-subjects, and figures which had the mission of giving special character to the movements. This is also very conspicuously noticeable in his various movements based on chorales, such as the choral fantasias, choral-vorspiele, and organ chorales, in which the strands are for the most part made up of passages taken from the chorales themselves. In fact, it would be difficult to find any form of art which has more interest and meaning in the texture than these; and this may be said to be the highest refinement of texture when it is all interwoven of strands having a thematic basis.

Yet even in his works we come across a feature which prefigures the problems of texture which were destined to exercise the minds of his successors. When we come to consider it frankly, there is hardly anything more surprising and inartistic than the practice of indicating harmonies by figures, and leaving the execution of one of the elements of musical effect to the tender mercies of any chance accompanist. It was to all intents an admission that composers did not know how to solve the problem of formulating the subordinate elements of their work, and cut the Gordian knot by leaving the harmonies in an indefinite and unorganized condition. They wanted the support of harmonies for their solo voices, but had not discovered how to give them an artistic coherence. Yet it is of the essence of texture that all the factors shall be in some way definitely formulated, otherwise the strands are confused. A mere succession of harmonies does

not provide any texture at all. Till the succession is given some kind of artistic vitality and definiteness it is nothing better than a smudge. It is just as though a painter should not know what to do with the subordinate parts of his canvas, and helplessly daub colour over them. Such procedure could not be excused on the ground of its summarizing detail, because in order to summarize a man must have some consciousness and experience of what he is summarizing. And in the harmonies indicated by figured basses there is no pretence of representing anything, or presupposing contrapuntal procedure. The object was merely to supply a full and satisfying mass of sound, which had in itself no necessary form or comeliness, and glossed over an unsolved problem. It was a condition of things which could only exist in an immature or transitional stage of art, and was bound to pass away as soon as composers grew more conscious of the necessity of clearly indicating every detail of their artistic intentions.

It is a singular illustration of the manner in which even the men of highest genius are the victims of their circumstances that B. Bach, the greatest master of texture of the polyphonic kind, should have accepted a subterfuge which was an antithesis and even a negation of texture. It was no necessity to him. We do not find it in any of his works for clavier, either in his preludes and fugues or his suites and toccatas. We do not find it in the great choruses in his motets or in any of his organ works. He made it superfluous in most of his solo movements, to which he has given amply developed instrumental accompaniments. But in view of the pressure under which a great many of the solo movements in his

cantatas were written, and possibly with the feeling that they would not be performed except under his immediate superintendence, he left a vast number of arias and recitatives for solo voices in the incomplete condition of having no accompaniment but the figured bass or "continuo," with figures to indicate in a general manner what harmonies would be required to support the voice.

The consequences are in many cases very harassing. For even he, great master as he was, could not always escape the tendency of such a practice to induce loose and indefinite thinking. And while no doubt his pupils and subordinates were so saturated with his style as to be able to make a respectable interpretation of the signs, in later times the tradition has faded away, and in a large number of cases it is difficult to tell what he did actually mean to be done; and the latitude left to discretion is mainly an invitation to those kinds of indiscretions which are familiar when irresponsible and uncultured people take upon themselves to harmonize Plainsong, producing a type of harmony and a disposition of its components which is totally alien to Bach's style and to the canons of taste of his time.

So we have to qualify when we speak of one of the greatest masters of texture, and admit that even his scheme was not all-sufficing. He solved the problems which were nearest to him, and had to leave those which would take many successions of later generations to grapple with. Colossal as his life's work was, he had, on account of that very constancy of labour, to accept conventions. And his acceptance of the inadequate convention of the figured



bass indicates the direction in which a new problem of texture was due to arise. Indeed it is permissible to surmise that the use of the figured bass was partly owing to a dim growing consciousness that there must be degrees of importance and of subordination in the features of any works of art; and that to make all the elements of texture of equal vitality is to overload the work and to overburden the mind in such a way as to prevent its realizing what is of greatest moment, and distract it from the central idea.

But the harmonization which was due, even in Bach's time, to become the basis of more perfectly adjusted artistic organization, required to be itself organized. It had to be reduced also to terms of texture; and it was through the difficulties which the new problem presented that no texture approaching Bach's in interest or completeness was again seen in the world of music till the later works of Beethoven, the posthumous quartets and the Ninth Symphony, and in many respects not till Wagner resumed Bach's polyphonic methods in orchestration, with the additional enhancement of all that the composers since Bach had contrived to evolve.

## XI

### TEXTURE

## II

ONE would not venture to imagine that people would study art in order to fortify their optimism. But all the same the close scrutiny of any form of art is wonderfully conducive thereto. For it supplies such pathetic proofs of the persistent devotion of artists and composers to ideals which are obscure to the world at large and, from a mundane point of view, quite unprofitable. But there is no need to pretend that art has a monopoly in this respect. The persistent instinct for good crops up in the most unexpected quarters. We are told that in those neighbourhoods where the most blood-curdling forms of melodrama are in vogue there are no people who hiss the villains more ferociously, or pour forth more copious tears of sensibility over oppressed and defrauded virtue, than those whose lives are spent on the verge of criminality. We even observe that people who defend the conventional morality of the money market and the standard of veracity of party politics commonly belie their paradoxes by living blameless and even generous lives. The instinct for what is wholesome and honourable seems somehow

to be perpetually at work in spite of appearances to the contrary; and whatever people may pretend by way of superfluous cleverness there is a persistent gravitation towards some healthily inspiring ideal in mankind at large. Art is a very close counterpart of the wider general life in such respects. We hear many counsels of imperfection, and we hear and see many phases which are base and ignoble, yet we find composers always faithful in the main to a progressive ideal, even if they do not quite know what they are striving after; and if the survey taken of the results of their labours be wide enough, and the mind be kept free from the bewilderment of individual aberrations, the persistent tendency can be seen towards the honourable solution of difficult and honourable problems, and the making of art more perfect.

The expanse of art is so wide and so comprehensive that we no longer have any need to make abstract theories, or formulate what it ought to be or to do. The consensus of composers for a vast number of generations, and the continuity and the uniformity of their efforts, are sufficient to show what was the nature of the mysterious instinct which predominated, what was the vague and persistent craving which made them strive after the vanquishment of difficulties, and what particular end they constantly endeavoured to attain.

One may admit that individuals were obedient to their inborn artistic instincts in different degrees. But even those who seem most completely depraved by misleading inducements have often been known to break out into vehement contempt at paltry work and evidences of inefficiency; in which they showed kinship with the native slum critic of the melodrama, for the

nonce betrayed into the attitude of the sensitive moralist. The true artistic insight and impulse, which are commonly present with any artistic endowment, inevitably beckon persistently in the direction of the betterment of artistic procedure, the making more perfect of every detail, the apportionment in the subtlest degrees of the innumerable elements which minister to the essential perfection of the work of art.

We may find the expression of this indomitable impulse most happily manifested in the strange story of the development of texture in musical works. The development has been purely unconscious, but the uniformity of its nature guarantees the instinctive agreement of composers on what it was desirable to attain. We have seen in John Sebastian Bach's works the highest attainable perfection in a special type of texture. As has been pointed out, the contrapuntal methods which he employed simplified the problems. Music was devised on the basis of a combination of lines. The very fact of texture is more obvious in works of art which are produced by a pencil or a graver than in works which comprise masses of colour. To some people texture seems quite unnecessary in works which consist of expanses of any kind, as has been observed in some of the products of the impressionists. Definition, which is the essence of texture, seems to arouse the spirit of rebellion in minds of a peculiarly susceptible temperament. But when we regard artists at large these prove to be only the individual sports, or aberrations among their fellows. Very often they are really only protesting against convention,—against the forms or formulas of thought

which have been of service but have passed their time and become superfluous and therefore obstructive. At any rate, in spite of the temptations to slovenliness which the use of colour introduces, composers and artists alike showed that they were impelled to seek for the perfect definition which expresses itself in texture quite as much in works comprising the elements of colour as they had done in the types of art produced by drawing or by the combination of lines.

In music, composers hardly began to wrestle with the problems of colour till they had brought to the highest perfection the methods of art based upon the combination of lines. And then they had, as it were, to go back to the bottom of things and to the most elementary standard, and to climb slowly upwards again. The first phase was that in which they attempted to deal in masses of sound instead of the harmonies which were the results of combined lines of counterpoint. The harmonies were the equivalents of the large spaces of simple colour in a painting, and composers did not the least know what to do with them. The ear had to be supplied with a good satisfying lump of tone, and composers for a time thought it unnecessary to organize the internal economies of these lumps of tone in any way; the chords as chords seemed for the time being to be sufficient. It was in this frame of mind that they adopted the cheap subterfuge of the figured bass, which has been commented upon. It is necessary here to discuss an aspect of this practice which has not been touched upon before, because its significance is emphasized by what resulted from it. It is to be observed that when a composer indicated the harmonies to be

used he made no pretence of showing how many notes were to be played in any given chord, or of desiring any variety in the proportionate thickness or thinness of the sound required as apposite. In music in which figured bass is employed the amount of sound is assumed to be the same from beginning to end. There is no suggestion of the value of variety. A crude monotony of mere fulness of sound seems to satisfy the composer's requirements. When one compares such usages with the devices of latter-day composers it brings home to the mind the extent to which the labours of a few generations have altered the prospect. Every one notices the tremendous volume of tone in which recent composers take delight. But perhaps it is not noticed that the effect of almost overpowering sound is mainly produced by the ingenuity with which they reduce the sound almost to nothing in other parts of their compositions. It is a question of proportion rather than of physical actuality. It is the delicate adjustment of passages when next to nothing is sounding to those in which full force is employed that enables masters of the craft to produce effects of great power even with very limited resources. And it is this fact which makes performances into which cannon and big drums and other forms of uproar are introduced to astonish the unintelligent so grotesquely stupid and anti-artistic. Beethoven fully understood this feature of art, as may be observed in the wonderful passage for the drum at the end of the scherzo of the C minor Symphony which immediately precedes the resounding opening of its last movement. And later developments have carried the contrasts of very soft with very loud passages to a much greater extreme, with obvious

intention. But the composers who used figured bass cared for none of these things. To them the contrasts of degrees of tone were quite superfluous. They were using masses of sound as a background, and the masses of sound hardly ever came within the sphere of art at all. The practice was universal. Handel and Purcell, and Alessandro Scarlatti and Lulli, and Carissimi and Corelli, and Buxtehude and Galuppi, and Hasse and Rameau and Keiser, and even Haydn and Mozart, all adopted it as a matter of course. The interesting thing is to see how the textureless presentation of lumps of sound came to be gradually transformed into artistic terms of definite articulation; first as formulas of accompaniment, then in characteristic terms which emphasized the expression, and then in terms of colour which made the musical material appeal more subtly to the sensibilities.

The first stage of the transformation from the crudely indefinite succession of supporting chords was the result of the qualities of the instruments employed in accompaniments. As every one is aware, the harpsichord had no power of sustaining tone, and when a harmony was required to persist for any length of time some device had to be adopted to represent its continuance. Of course the chord might be repeated again and again. But it is a curious fact that early composers had a sort of shyness of adopting such an obvious expedient, and preferred as a rule to find some formula which could represent the harmony. This was no doubt the origin of such familiar formulas as the so-called Alberti bass which figures in such profusion in the music of all composers of the earlier harmonic period, having been used by Pachelbel before Alberti's time and being patronized by such great people as Mozart

and Haydn and Beethoven after. It may seem strange that composers should have been content with such simple formulas, which were everybody's property, when Bach had already shown the possibilities of formulating progressions of chords with such exquisite variety in his preludes. It appears as though the adoption of a particular line of art, such as that of vocal solo with accompaniment, more or less shut composers' minds off from anything that was not in consonance with average practice in that line; and they contentedly continued to use the formulas in fashion at their time, without worrying themselves to find anything more individual. Like many folks in the ordinary affairs of life, they accepted the accepted because it was accepted. But, on the other hand, there was an element of wisdom in their practice, as there is in many absurd social conventions; for the extreme simplicity of the new style, that which appertained to opera and the early phases of the classical sonata, would have made too decisive characterization of details inappropriate; and the exaggeration of minutiae would give the appearance of fussiness and throw the average balance of style out of gear. The instinct of composers in this respect was just. The new texture would not stand the juxtaposition or intermingling of the much finer quality of the old. It would be like putting a fine piece of old material into a cheap new garment. And we find this subtly enforced by the fact that when the composers of the new harmonic style reverted somewhat to the earlier style their texture becomes much more interesting, as we find in those works of Philipp Emanuel Bach which are most akin to the superb style of his father.



It will perhaps help to make this very difficult subject more intelligible if we anticipate and summarize the course of events. The object of composers was to make every detail of the artistic organization tell more effectually, so as to make their compositions more richly and permanently interesting and more alive in every part. When they had passed through the phase of merely enlivening the inner parts, by putting them into the conventional formulas, akin to the Alberti type, their next step was to make their figures of accompaniment more individual, and more in accordance with the mood of the music as a whole. From this the stretch was not far to adopting figures which had some discernible connection with the thematic material, and this gradually led to the situation represented by the elaborate interweaving of "Leitmotive" as developed by Wagner. And as by this process music became once again more and more polyphonic, the outcome of this phase was the recent ultimate evolution of the device of making the individual strands of the texture of diverse colours, that is, of different tone qualities, in order to appeal more subtly to susceptibilities. The sum of human effort was thus to dispense with all dead and unmeaning matter, all superfluous verbiage, all mere daubing by way of filling up the subordinate parts of the picture, and, as nearly as possible, to arrive at the ideal of perfect organization, in which every detail, from the most prominent features to those whose office was most humble, had in its own degree some intelligible purpose and some vital relevancy to the whole.

This result could only be attained by a general

raising of the average richness and vitality of the musical material in every respect, including rhythm, colour, harmonic progression, and melodic form. And the ideal is so difficult of attainment that only few composers have succeeded in keeping their brains up to the strain without betraying the effort. Art is a very pretty counterpart of social conditions, and generally reflects them. We might regard the early system of art, where effect is chiefly dependent upon the outstanding tunes, while the subordinate elements of texture are mainly dummies, as analogous to the state of society when the lower orders were of no account and the world seemed to consist only of the small privileged classes of the nobles and higher ranks of society. Like society, art becomes more completely organized, by recognizing more fully the sphere of usefulness of the humbler ranks of its components. But great as the advance has been in both cases we have to admit that there are still considerable evidences of the unemployed, and art does not show any more complete success than society in discovering what to do with the unemployable; partly because in art, as in society, there are many backsliders who do not want the problems solved, or in their easy-going way forget that they are there.

But the subject must be considered a little more in detail. We know Mozart as one of those natural geniuses who poured out spontaneously and without any high intellectual effort the flood of simple beauty which was perpetually welling up within him. He took things as they were, content to use the manner of his time, without worrying about burning questions or being deeply moved by ideals. He was not fiercely intent on telling the public anything. He

rather disliked the trouble of writing, little as it was to him, and when he did write, which was very frequently, he did so because he was obliged to keep the wolf from the door, or because he was irresistibly impelled to seek for popular sympathy with his work. It is not surprising, then, to find in his work a general acceptance of the principle of employing formulas which were accepted as everybody's property for the subordinate phases of his work. We all know the simple style of his figures of accompaniment, the simple devices of tonic and dominant which he uses again and again for his cadences without a suspicion of their emptiness and lack of individuality. Haydn, without so much natural endowment, had quite a different attitude about his work. One must say (with possible hesitation) that there was much more artistic sincerity about him, and more mind. He had much more respect for the claims of the lower orders, and much more kinship with the spirit that was progressive. Of course it may be fairly pointed out that he outlived Mozart by so many years that he came at least to be aware of the expansion of the human mind in general which came about in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Such things, as has often been said, and cannot be said too often, express themselves in art. And we find in Haydn's later works a greater individuality of texture than we do in Mozart, a tendency to give individual life to subordinate details, a desire to enforce the sentiment by bringing forces which had been more or less dormant into activity.

In this connection it was inevitable that Gluck, with his intense dramatic aspiration, should seek for figures of accompaniment which ministered to the

dramatic situation, but from a different point of view.

But if the relation to social changes is dimly discernible in Haydn, in Beethoven it is conspicuously and irrefutably confirmed by the composer's well-known sympathy with advanced ideas. While he was burning with the desire for the emancipation of man from conventional disabilities, and was moved to write one of his greatest works by the idea of expressing in music the characteristics of a great liberator of the people, he was also impelled to regard his art as the expression of himself—of that intense vehemence of the great temperament that feels the responsibility of every detail—to whom the fact that a feature in the work of art is subordinate even in the humblest degree does not relieve him from the duty of giving it a character which is consistent with his own individuality. In Beethoven's works, then, we may expect a far greater interest and vitality of texture. It is true that in his earlier works we find frequent adoption of the conventional formulas. He took a very long while to find himself, and at first naturally accepted as adequate the standards of the greatest who went before him. Who, indeed, would not accept the ruling of such great masters of the craft as immediately preceded him, some of the very greatest of all time? But happily he was not one of those who argue that what is good enough for some one else, however great, is good enough for him. He began to show of what mettle he was very soon, and as time went on the instinct within him made him develop more and more the possibilities of subordinate details. There was no theoretic reasoning about it. It came as the

necessary result of his attitude towards art, of his fiery intensity of earnestness. It is to a great extent the much richer character of his later works which gives them their vast increase of interest over the earlier works; and it is also owing to the facilities which the quartet form affords for dealing with the problem of texture on a moderately simple scale that the posthumous quartets are so supreme as examples of texture. In these we find each individual instrument fitted with passages ideally suited to its idiosyncrasies in the matter of style, each independent, each ministering by individual vitality to the greater vitality of the whole. In this we see a reversion to the methods of J. S. Bach, but with the increment of all the artistic advance which had been made in the new harmonic style since Bach's time; that is, that the harmonic system as presented in the classical sonata was being converted into terms of polyphony.

But while the posthumous quartets of Beethoven present this state of texture in an extraordinarily concentrated form, his methods were not restricted to quartet-writing. The problem was more complicated in orchestral music, and the standard of what we may call vitalization of detail was not so uniform in many of the symphonies. Yet in the movements which show him at his greatest the vividness of his personal utterance is shown also in the vitality of the subordinate elements, as in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony.

However, it is necessary to observe that in the person of Beethoven we come to some interesting cross currents which complicate the story very materially. Beethoven was at once the consummator of the highest ideal of the classical sonata and the great

prototype and fountain-head of the romantic phase of art. The sense of expressing something external to music in music which is not defined by words becomes pronounced in him, first among the great representatives of the classical period. And the effect of the romantic impulse, in so far as it consciously attempted the expression of anything external to music in musical terms, is to distribute interest of detail with more sense of proportion and appositeness; in the works of the lesser composers actually to diminish the interest of texture. The extreme parallel is seen in earlier phases of impressionist art, where the intention is to convey in general terms a vivid portrayal of something seen, some strange combination of colours or fantastic objects, without attempting to employ any of the intellectual arguments of art. In Beethoven this is manifested to a certain extent in his middle period, where he begins to make more use of great effects of tone and of wonderful and deeply moving harmonic progressions; of those subtleties of modulation which gave the cue to the romantic composers of the next generation, and suggested to Wagner the astonishing combination of tonalities which so raised the wrath of the apostles of correctitude a quarter of a century ago. The effect of such procedure was to make composers rely more on sensuous effects, on effects of colour, and on association and suggestion in brilliant passages rather than upon the finer and more individual artistic interest of detail. We may find this strikingly illustrated by the earlier enthusiasts of the new style, as it was called, when programme music was first openly and vehemently advocated. It is most aggressively evident in Liszt's works of

almost all kinds. The ingenious technical presentation of figures and passages in his works is generally most effective from the purely instrumental point of view, but musically estimated the details are extremely poor. The texture looks rich enough, but it proves, when intimately known, to be commonplace and empty. And the same may be said of similar work in the present day. People talk of the richness of some modern works, and overlook the fact that the texture is made up of commonplace formulas of scales and arpeggios, which are apt to the instruments and say nothing to the mind; mere superficial splutters of pretended vivacity with no vitality in them. The same may be said of Berlioz's programme works, which are at times singularly empty and commonplace in detail.

Our beloved Schubert appears to occupy a very peculiar position in this part of the story. He was as spontaneous as Mozart, and we cannot pretend that he was an intellectual composer. But no man was ever more influenced by things external to music when he was in the act of composing. The well-known story that his friend Mayrhofer used to throw a new poem across the table to him, which he just read through and immediately began to set to music, shows that the suggestion of the poem immediately set the musical impulse going. His songs, of course, prove this in a very marked degree. They are all closely interpretative. But the course that commonly approved itself to him was to adopt some musical figure for the accompaniment which strongly expressed the spirit of the words and the mood of the song, which he most frequently maintained throughout. He thus treated the figuration of the harmonic

successions much in the same way as Bach did in his preludes, with a feeling of the closest appositiveness to the matter external to music which was expressed in the poem. His texture in this sense was simple and also in a sense primitive; but it was the forerunner of that type of artistic procedure in which the words are more closely followed, and several figures are welded together so as to illustrate and enforce the general purport of the words, as well as the intimate sentiment of each line and the subtleties of each verbal suggestion.

There appears very little in common between Schubert and Wagner as personalities. The stage was not congenial to Schubert, but it was all in all to Wagner. Yet in a sense the figures of accompaniment of Schubert are his type of *Leit-motive*. And Wagner only expanded the same principle in the truly marvellous texture of the orchestral accompaniments in his music dramas. So step by step composers have vanquished new vantage-ground; and the advantage of the position that Wagner won and composers still enjoy, not always to the enjoyment of their audiences, is that the greatly enhanced richness of texture supplies such a vastly more extended sphere of operations. When lines are simple there is but moderate opportunity for the expression of the individualities of composers; when they are infinitely complicated there is infinitely more scope to use characteristic phrases. This is the explanation of the much greater diversity that there is between one average composer and another in the present day than there was a hundred and fifty years ago. The development of texture supplies them with more varied opportunities. It need not be supposed



that they always avail themselves of it, as not many are consistent enough to give the impression of a definite personality. The most popular Italian opera composers of to-day are falling back into the reliance on mere tune with purely conventional formulas of accompaniment, interspersed with spasms of hysterical incoherence. The popular instrumental composers tend to rely on startling or sensuously attractive little nuclei hitched together by their ends. The texture, which is closely coherent and knits a whole work into a deeply convincing work of art, gives place to the quick succession of diversified appeals to nervous centres; and the intellectual element is for the time being subordinated to the physical irritant.

The kind of texture we have been discussing belongs, however, mainly to branches of music associated with words. But in the latest phases of rhapsodical programme music we come across the most elaborate use of texture made up in great part of thematic material, such as goes by the now generally accepted name of "Leitmotiv." And the most extreme developments of texture which now frequently present themselves are such that several tunes or representative figures go on simultaneously without any consideration of their being in the same key, or representing consistent harmonies. German composers have arrived at the very utmost extravagance of what may indeed be called positive libertinage in the application of the principles of texture which have been evolved up to our time. They possibly do not regard it as a question of texture, yet their position is mainly explicable on that basis. The various parts which make up the texture are treated with so much independence that

they seem to go their various ways without any regard to what the others are doing. Indeed the latest manifestations show a remarkable analogy to the progress of the capacities of mind, for the tendency seems to be not only to make the various individual lines pursue independent courses, but to attach to them the harmonies which belong to them, and to employ successions of chords as the ingredients of texture without paying any regard to the false relations and clashing of subordinate notes which result; suggesting the analogy of the development of capacity in the mind to think in bundles; as may be observed in the following passages from Strauss's *Heldenleben* and *Electra* :—

HELDENLEBEN

STRAUSS.

The musical score is for the orchestral work *Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss. It is a 3/4 time piece in B-flat major. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. The instruments are listed on the left: Woodwind (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon), Horns (four parts), Trumpets (three parts), Tubas (two parts), Violins (first and second), and Violas, Cellos, Double Basses (all sharing the bottom staff). The woodwind and horn parts are relatively simple, often playing single notes or short phrases. The trumpet and tuba parts are more complex, featuring triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The violin and viola parts are the most complex, featuring dense, rapid sixteenth-note passages. The bottom staff, which serves as the common staff for violas, cellos, and double basses, contains a complex, dense texture of notes. The score is marked with 'Tutti' at the beginning of the horn part. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with 'etc.' at the end of the bottom staff.

NOTE.—There are several more independent parts, but the above is sufficient to indicate clearly the principles adopted.

## ELECTRA

STRAUSS.

The image displays a musical score for the opera 'Electra' by Richard Strauss. The score is written for a string quartet (labeled 'Strings' on the left) and piano accompaniment. The music is in G major, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#) in the key signature. The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the strings playing a melodic line in the upper voices, while the piano provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. The second system continues the melodic development in the strings, with the piano accompaniment featuring more complex chordal textures. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Of a different order is the kind of texture which is subtly made of diverse coloured strands. The modern Germans supply us with plenty of examples of this also—but we may look to Tschaïkowsky with his abnormally sensitive nature for the most subtle examples of this kind of texture, which is in a sense a very high development of the normal principles of the older type of art, founded on æsthetic considerations :—

## VARIATION FROM SUITE

TSCHAIKOWSKY.

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains four staves: 1st & 2nd Flutes (top), 3rd Flute, Two Clarinets, and Bassoon (bottom). The second system contains four staves: 1st & 2nd Flutes (top), 3rd Flute, Two Clarinets, and Bassoon (bottom). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is written in a clear, professional style with a focus on the texture of the woodwind section.

The story of texture shows in this way the persistent and generous concentration of effort of composers to enhance the beauty and expand the resources and the meaning of art. And it is the more impressive because texture is a side of art which does not appeal very much to the wider audiences of the general public at first. Indeed, texture very often rather repels easy-going people. It makes it seem as though there was too much to take in. It certainly does not minister to the mercantile consideration of quick returns. It is possibly owing to Brahms's being such a supreme master of texture that his works

were slow in winning general appreciation. But when works such as his have obtained their footing the beauty and interest of their texture make their hold the more permanent. The truth is apparent in this, as elsewhere, that the best that men do is not for profit but for posterity.

## XII

### EVOLUTION OF THEMATIC MATERIAL

#### I

LIKE many other technical words which have been much used by theorists, the word "Subject" has grown to mean different things at different times and in different situations, and it seems impossible to find a definition which will cover all possible uses and misuses of the term and provide adequately against confusion of mind.

People who have no need to think scientifically or exhaustively would probably describe subjects as musical ideas, or phrases or groups of connected phrases upon which movements are built, and for general purposes the description would be adequate. But when it is necessary to come to close quarters with the matter it is better to have a clearer conception of what is meant. A subject derives its definiteness from the use of characteristic melodic intervals or harmonies, or rhythm, or accent, or type of motion, such as smooth and quiet motion, or abrupt and angular motion, or vivacious and headlong motion or some such quality; and it is to be observed that it is frequently made up of groups of short phrases or nuclei which the divination of the

composer contrives to make convincing. In short works and in folk-music, when the material is definite in character, it is inevitable that what would be called the subject must also be short, sometimes not more than three notes, while in other cases, such as the slow movements of Beethoven's quartets, sonatas, and symphonies, it may extend to quite long passages. But in the latter cases the subject, as it is there called, is compounded of a number of definite sections or phrases very much in the same manner as complete folk-songs. So the word "Subject" in a general survey will not be so convenient a term as thematic material, for of whatever dimensions a subject may be its constituents amount to thematic material, and though the terms have an unattractive sound it is better to be unattractive than unintelligible. It will not be serviceable to discuss thematic material in folk-music here, as in many respects folk-music stands altogether apart from the music which is cultivated by musicians as an art. It will be sufficient to say that folk-music arrived at very decisive definition of its thematic material among some races while artistic music was still in the early stages of trying to find out how to evolve definite musical ideas. Something may be said on this score later. For the present it need only be observed that what must be called artistic music, such as the early music of the Church, was quite content to borrow from the laity, as though it did not recognize the making of definite subjects as within its province. Yet from the earliest times till the present day one of the most constant objects of composers has been to achieve definition; and, as subsidiary to that aim, thematic material has grown more definitely individual as the

unravelling of artistic methods has proceeded. In fact, thematic material became more and more pregnant as composers increased their resources. They first defined melody by rhythm, then gave it clearer form and greater interest and meaning by wedding it to harmony, and then enhanced it by modulation and colour.

In the early stages of music, such as the early choral music previous to the seventeenth century, there were practically no subjects or thematic material at all. There was nothing which stood out decisively from the context to lay hold of the mind and serve as a sort of clue or text to the meaning of the musical discourse. The music was all vague and indefinite. It floats before us, almost amorphous, and suggests no purpose of thematic definition. From one point of view this accords with the higher conception of purely subjective devotional music, in which the intellectual processes are in abeyance and the human creature is in the attitude of pure submission, reverence, and emotional ecstasy. It was not till secular instrumental music began to be cultivated about the end of the sixteenth century that anything of the nature of a genuine subject began vaguely to present itself. And inasmuch as the early types of instrumental music were adaptations of types of vocal music and still limited to the methods of choral art, the early subjects in instrumental music were still no more than slight transformations of vocal parts or types of melody, and only a little less indefinite than the actual choral passages. And moreover as composers were so far limited to the contrapuntal types of vocal music the only schemes of organization which were available were fugal. The first stages



in development of thematic material were therefore in fugue subjects, and the stages that have to be observed are, first, the emergence of elementary definiteness of contour; then the more distinct definition which comes with the indication of rhythm and metre; then the introduction of ornament such as befitted instrumental music.

As long as instrumental music was little more than imitation of choral music it was inevitable that it should be deficient in rhythm, and it is especially through lack of rhythmic qualities that the individuality of subjects was, at first, so slight; as may be observed in these examples:—

## RICERCAR

JAQUES BUUS, 1547.



## RICERCAR À TRE

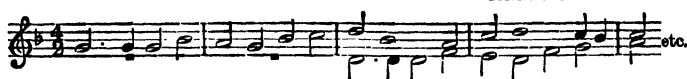
ADRIAN WILLAERT.



When rhythm began to dawn upon composers as a necessity it was introduced in a very elementary manner—frequently nothing more than repeated notes in a simple rhythmic form:—

## RICERCAR

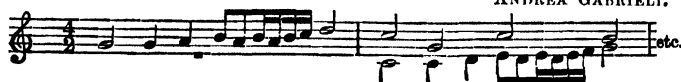
ANDREA GABRIELI.



Simultaneously composers realizing the greater readiness of instruments for ornament introduced some simple types of turns and runs which give the subject a slightly more vivacious effect:—

## FANTASIA

ANDREA GABRIELI.



But still, as far as the end of the sixteenth century subjects remained stiff and helpless. Though these various types of instrumental forms of the fugal order such as the *ricercar* and the *canzona* have passages in single parts which are just identifiable as subjects, they do not stand out very conspicuously from the context. Andrea Gabrieli represents the elementary stage in which rhythm is just perceptible, and ornament serves to relieve the monotony of mere essential notes of melody. His great nephew, the enterprising Giovanni Gabrieli, affords us examples of a slightly more lively and vivacious character, as we may observe in a *canzona* for the organ which probably belongs to the date of 1595 :—

## CANZONA

GIOVANNI GABRIELI.



It is necessary to observe here that about this time forms of art were being explored which were not of the fugal order, nor, indeed, necessarily of the contrapuntal order at all, but were attempts to achieve instrumental works with all the panoply of harmony and ornament, independent of choral models. But herein the inevitable limitations of development are the more decisively confirmed. For in such works as the *toccatas* of the ingenious organist Claudio Merulo there is hardly anything of the nature of a subject at all. They are merely a kind of rambling rhapsodical extemporization without definite thematic material,

and are made up of runs and indefinite successions of chords. And the rule applied to such forms of art even till the time of J. S. Bach. It only shows how the human creature had to content himself with the rule of solving his problems in the order of their complexity, and how he was obliged to work out the problem of single-part subjects, before he could proceed to the formulation of many-part and harmonized subjects.

It may be admitted that the organ, which afforded the earliest opportunity for composers to experiment in instrumental music, was not very favourable to the attainment of definition in thematic material; as it is the most unrhythmic of instruments, and rhythm is such an essential element in thematic definition. More definition might well be expected in the harpsichord music, which was cultivated with such ardour and success in this country in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean times. But, indeed, if we examine the copious mass of early music for the domestic keyed instruments which remains to us in the famous Fitzwilliam Collection, formerly called Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book, and in the MS. Collections of Mulliner, Cosyn, Will Foster, and the Abergavenny MSS., the progress shown towards the conception of definite subjects does not appear to be remarkably rapid. It is true that the harpsichord and virginal composers rather tabooed the fugal type, and preferred to experiment in little dance tunes, and sets of variations and fantasias and preludes. But in these we find a surprising absence of anything of the nature of a definite subject which really dominates a movement. The idea of a really distinctive subject seems hardly to have entered into the composers'

minds except when they were engaged with fugal and contrapuntal forms. The dimly dawning sense of the advantage of a coherent principle is felt in such a singularly elementary form as that known as the "Ut-Re-Mi-Fa," which was popular with all the leading instrumental composers of the time—which consisted of nothing more than a portion of the scale slowly played and reiterated all through a movement with a variety of passages added thereto. The scale passage was recognizable throughout, like a "ground bass," and served to unify the movement as a basis of organization, but it could hardly be described as a subject—and if it was, it was still a single-part subject.

The only thing we can say about such subjects as appear in this virginal music is that they are a little more vivacious than the subjects of contemporary organ music. They have more lively passages and more runs in them, and are in a sense more distinctive :—

## FANTASIA

WILLIAM BYRD.



The cultivation of virginal music came to a strange pause after the Elizabethan and early Jacobean time, so we have to look back again to organ music for progressive development. And in this range we

come to such men of genius as Frescobaldi, who gives proof of his instinct for necessary definition in a manner which is a conspicuous advance on his forerunners; for most of his fugal subjects have a lively and recognizable character:—

## CANZONA

FRESCOBALDI.



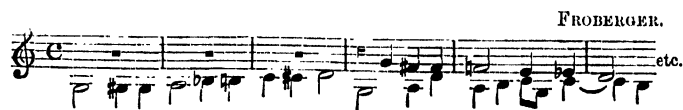
And with him we begin to come within the range of chromatic passages, which immensely enhance the range of characterization, and begin to introduce some colour and something of the nature of sentiment into the thematic material:—

## CANZONA

FRESCOBALDI.



But it is still only in the range of movements of the fugal type with single-part subjects that we find definition arrived at. Enterprising as Frescobaldi was in his toccatas and movements which contain massed harmonies and florid passages, the thematic material remains vague; and this is the case also with that interesting composer the German Froberger, of slightly later date, whose toccatas and suites are of very fine quality, but more like studies in simple moods than movements defined by subjects. Froberger's fugue subjects are, however, worth taking note of as they are often a little more vivacious and varied than Frescobaldi's, and still more chromatic:—



There is no need to follow all the interesting organists of the seventeenth century, such as Pachelbel, Muffat, Kerl, since we have the cue to the nature of the progress which they were making; but we arrive at a very important point in the story with Buxtehude, for in his works we find the decisive achievement of varied characterization, and a much wider range of the actual subject both in scope and in expression :—

(a)

BUXTEHUDE.



(b)

*Largo.*



In such matters he is the immediate forerunner of J. S. Bach. Buxtehude is sometimes spirited, sometimes pathetic, sometimes mysterious and romantic. He touches many moods and defines them well. From Buxtehude it is only a step to John Sebastian Bach, whom we recognize as essentially the one special composer who solved the problem of fugue from the musical point of view—and as far as thematic material is concerned he attains (within the limits of a single-part subject) to the highest pitch of variety and expression. The subjects of his various fugues give the cue to the character of the movements built upon them to an unprecedented degree. Indeed, as far as a fugue can go in its supremely elastic possibilities, his fugues are epitomized anticipations of the most advanced modern ideas in instrumental music, and even in a sense in music dramas :—





But the fact that composers could not arrive at the conception of definite musical subjects in masses of harmony is curiously illustrated by the works of J. S. Bach in non-fugal forms. For whenever he deals with masses of sound at the outset of a movement in the place where the fugue subject would be, as in the suites and concertos and orchestral overtures, the material does not take the nature of a definite subject nor stand out from the context in the way that a subject would do in more modern forms, but merely indicates a type of motion, the cue to the mood of the movement, the suggestion to the mind of the auditor of the attitude of mind which he may adopt to receive full measure of the artistic message of the movement. This is illustrated by the fact that in the movements of suites, when the initial bars are resumed later on in the movement, the actual thematic material is very much transformed and transfigured. Indeed, much of the fascination of the suite movement is derived from the manner in which the type of material is made to conform without actual reproduction—like a man delicately talking round a subject or subtly suggesting an idea or a concrete fact without descending to the commonplace resource of actually stating it. This form appeals to the higher orders of cultivated minds, and it is one of the



reasons why Bach's music appeals mainly to an intelligent type and is lost upon shallow and indolent minds, who like to have the facts stated in the most obvious and unmistakable terms and frequently reiterated to prevent their forgetting what is being talked about.

But in cases of progressive development of this kind one must always be prepared for isolated and quasi-erratic anticipation, and in music that truly astonishing phenomenon Domenico Scarlatti supplies such vagaries. In a great measure the subjects of his most vivacious sonatas or lessons are one-part subjects of the fugal type, but his anticipatory genius, always making for definiteness of statement, often forestalls later development, and gives the world something of the nature of thematic material of the true rhythmic type; and sometimes even anticipates by a sort of accident the modern use of a subject, by making some vivid and decisive little figure almost the text of part at least of a movement, and making it recur frequently in well-devised relation to other definite subjects. But Scarlatti stands quite alone in the decisiveness of his subject-matter, and no other composer of his time except J. S. Bach presents such decisive clearness of characterization; and, as he had no followers, his principles were not illustrated by the composers who came after him for some time. His exceptional position was probably owing to the fact that he was brought up under the influence of the harmonic style, so admirably illustrated by his great father Alessandro Scarlatti, on to which he grafted the type of figure which was common in the true instrumental polyphonic style, intensified by his instinct as a true virtuoso of his instrument;—

(a) DOMENICO SCARLATTI.  
*tr.*

(b) *tr.* *tr.* *f*

(c) *Allegro.* *tr.* *tr.*

The situation at this moment of the story is peculiarly interesting, as what it is necessary to trace is the transition from the single-part subject to the harmonic subject of the sonata type, which preceded the modern subject of the later order, so pregnant with intrinsic meaning. And on this phase of the subject much light is thrown by the great school of Italian violinists of the early part of the eighteenth century, Tartini, Locatelli, Nardini, Geminiani—and even Handel and Bach, who in this branch of art followed their lead. In their works we find two illuminative features. In many cases under the influence of the love of Italians for expressive and ornate melody they adopted a style very different from the fugal style, in which the genius of their instruments was happily illustrated in fine melodic passages. But these passages did not at once attain to the point of having harmonies which were distinctive. The subjects are still in a sense single-part subjects, as the harmony was actually not written in, but the accompaniment merely indicated by a

bass line and figures ; a procedure which a composer would hardly be likely to adopt if he wished to attain any very exact definition of the effect of any part of the subject except the tune.

Another feature of these works which is also illuminative is that in a large number of the sonatas one of the most prominent movements was in a quasi-fugal form, imitated from the traditional canzona, which we find in many of the early sonatas for strings—such as Purcell's and Corelli's and Bassani's. But the oddity of the situation consists in the fact that the fugal subject in such cases is often supplied with a harmonic accompaniment, which lessens the significance of the subject in fugal form, without attaining to anything more advanced than a single-part subject—and, moreover, in these cases the effect of the fugal subject being presented in an unfugal manner so detracts from its essentially fugal effect that the movements are very rarely carried out as fugues, but soon lose sight of the subject. So the essential urgency of the single-part subject is again vindicated. And the curious mode of procedure is even followed by the great J. S. Bach himself when he is following the lines of the Italian violin-sonata composers.

The true course of development is to be found in the line of the classical sonata, which began to loom large on the musical horizon after John Sebastian Bach had put the crown on the whole range of the various forms of the polyphonic instrumental order, such as the fugue, the canzona, the fantasia, the suite, the instrumental overture, and the toccata. Of this phase of art Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was the pioneer ; and it is truly surprising how soon he came

near to the modern idea of a subject. No doubt a good many of his sonatas have rather formal subjects without much really interesting character about them, and he very often affords instances of mere single-part melody with perfunctory figuration of harmony. Yet there are a good many cases in which all the subject, its harmony included, is distinctive and serviceable, as a necessary part of the effect. But here we come upon the phase in which the characteristic features of the subject are made to stand out from the context by the formal closes employed to indicate to the hearer the completion of the definite sentence. It was quite out of the question that at this stage of the development a composer should realize that thematic material might stand out by the strength of its intrinsic character. Neither would the standard of development of artistic method at that time admit of a subject being used without formal processes which ministered to the intelligibility of the scheme of organization. The art had to go through the whole process of the classical sonata in all its multifarious phases before a return could be made to elastic conditions similar to those of the earlier fugue, which admitted of a subject being used without formal indications of its limits. Of this phase of subject-development examples by Philipp Emanuel Bach illustrate a formal presentation of necessary successions of harmony, made artistic by figures and ornaments, thoroughly suitable to the style of the harpsichord for which he wrote. But, indeed, there is not as yet in reality much variety. The procedure is rather formal and polite and reticent and not often suggestive of sentiment or emotion :—

(a) CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH.

(b)

(c)

The same condition of things is discernible in Mozart's and Haydn's various works in sonata forms, and many subjects may be pointed to in their instrumental works which still occupy the intermediate position of being single-part subjects with subordinate accompaniments.

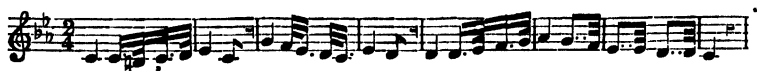
MOZART.

It is when we come to Beethoven that we approximate truly to the type of subject which is intrinsically so forcible that a mere phrase lays hold of the mind, and the artificial delimitations of closes seem to be losing their relevance. And in this connection what

we know of the manner in which he hammered at his subjects is most illuminative. It shows what a much greater importance he attached to them than previous composers had done. Previous to his time it had been sufficient to cast a subject on recognized formal lines, and great concentration of faculty was not necessary. But with Beethoven such procedure was inadequate. In the presentation of his type of subject every note told, and everything must be thought out with the most delicate and careful consideration. When the subject had to be spiritually consistent, and all the features of harmony, rhythm and figuration ministered to the true expression, the least trace of familiar formality disturbed the equilibrium, caused the mind of the hearer to relax, and suggested the element of inadequate vitality. It was possibly this which caused Beethoven to go on turning over his subjects in his mind for years, modelling and remodelling till every part and every feature satisfied his highly wrought instinct. If we take a familiar instance, the funeral march of the Eroica Symphony, we find in his sketch-book a first draft, which only remotely suggests the noble subject, though some of its characteristic features are there :—



We then find a version which represents much of the subject as we know it, but with a poor and flat conclusion :—



He evidently felt there was something inadequate in this, but was not sure what it was—and he produced another version,



which is very much remodelled, and has not so many features of the final version as the second sketch. He evidently felt that this was over-sophisticated, and his next attempt more nearly reverted to the second version, but happened on a still poorer and more sentimental cadence :—



But this, indeed, required nothing more than the mending of the cadence to make the whole subject complete in all its stern nobility of sorrow, in which form it appears in the fifth sketch :—



There are numerous examples of such steadfast determination to make his subjects completely consistent in all their lofty significance. And it is the significance of this fact which presents the whole idea of the subject in a new light. His instinctive craving was to make the subject not only definite and individual but to make it mean something, and to enforce that meaning with the utmost subtlety that could be effected by all the resources of his art.

And with this view in mind he often built up his subjects of nuclei which have a vivid and striking personality. The subject of the first movement of the C minor Symphony is a strong case in point, and so are the subjects of the great Choral Symphony. And it is the decisiveness of their nuclei which has made the works appeal so powerfully to the humanity of his hearers and reach the hearts of so many thousands. For the unsophisticated justly realize by instinct that the musical work of art does not establish its value by the manner in which it is put together, nor by the mere skill in management of machinery or deftness in organization which it displays. These latter may be intensely valuable and interesting in a secondary sense, but the real ultimate value of works of art depends on what they have to present, upon what the composer actually has to say—and the first type of what he has to say in modern music is represented in the subject and what it admits of being used for. Beethoven's use of the subject, though often as yet attended by the conventional cadences and the orderly exposition characteristic of the sonata type, yet became the model upon which the later subjects of the hundreds of smaller movements of the romantic period were based, and prefigured the principles on which Wagner developed his "leitmotive," and which later composers, following suit, applied in instrumental music.



## XIII

### EVOLUTION OF THEMATIC MATERIAL

#### II

MANY of men's most interesting discoveries and most useful inventions seem to be made when they are trying to find out something else. When any great problem is taken to pieces and discussed in sections there is always a danger of causing the inference that the particular aspect or phase under discussion was cultivated deliberately, with purpose set, and with full comprehension of definite objects; while, as a matter of fact, points of vantage, new products of combination, and new artistic methods seem to emerge rather than to be consciously sought for, and to be merely incidental to general efforts to advance and improve social or artistic conditions.

There is no explorer more hopelessly ignorant of the country ahead of him than the musician. Musicians who used sharps and flats to avoid disagreeable intervals in early choral music had no idea that their proceedings would lead to the extinction of their system of modes and the gradual emergence of the modern system of keys. The composers who thought that the basis of the form of their sonata movements was the distribution of

the subjects were unaware that they were laying the foundations of the modern system of basing design on the distribution of key centres. Even Beethoven, when he devoted such prolonged concentration of mind to the perfecting of his subjects and the exact modelling of his phrases, was quite unaware that he was preparing the way for a new conception of thematic material and new ways of presenting it, which would make the conventional half closes and closes of the classical type of subject superfluous. That music having been confined to vocal performance in early days, and to a scale that was little more than diatonic, made it almost impossible to give strong outstanding character to thematic material is a fact that is obvious to those that come long after, but it is unlikely that the composers could be aware of it. The manner in which rhythmic qualities helped definition when instruments were introduced is also a matter which is obvious now, but it is unlikely that it was realized consciously in its full significance by those who availed themselves of it except as part of the general advance in the scope of art. The same was the case when harmony for a time ousted counterpoint, and with every successive stage in the process of evolution. The fact that composers' minds were occupied with the larger issues ministered to the continuity and uniformity of the subordinate lines of progress, of which the gradual emergence of thematic material into greater prominence and individuality was a most important factor.

But if, on the one hand, the story of this development is unified by the similarity of the principles which underlie it, on the other hand it is decisively

divided into two distinct periods by a change in the attitude of composers which began to manifest itself about the end of the eighteenth century.

The old tradition that it is the duty of art to be beautiful still subsisted in those days; and the partisans of different schools waxed hot against one another on the subject. But all the while the fight was mainly the old familiar story of misapprehension about the meaning of terms. By beauty some people mean sensuous beauty pure and simple, others mean the beauty of things which are only apprehended by the mind and the temperamental instincts. Italians are people with very exceptional feeling for sensuous beauty, and the earlier developments of music having been mainly in their hands, musical art in all its earlier phases, including the exquisitely perfect early church choral music, was characterized by simple sensuous beauty, by beauty of actual sound, beauty of contour of melody, beauty of simple design. But towards the end of the eighteenth century the development of musical art was passing into the hands of races with less natural appreciation of sensuous beauty, and much greater appreciation of intellectual conceptions—appreciation of the beauty of human things external to music which were expressed with subtle closeness by the music. The difference is illustrated even in early phases by comparing the ruggedness, the harshness and crudeness of Purcell's music with the suavity and the polished grace and pleasantness of Carissimi or Alessandro Scarlatti. Even so early the definition of beauty seems to require revision. A great deal of Bach's music cannot be called sensuously beautiful, and yet its quality of beauty is far more appealing

than the most agreeable works of the greatest Italian masters. It is the same difference which may be felt between such northern painters as Van Eyck, Albert Dürer, Memling or Holbein on the one hand and the great Italian masters on the other. In connection with painting depreciation of the great Italians is not to be thought of, but the feeling is inevitable that the conception of beauty of northern painters was different from that of southern masters. And similarly when northern composers obtained more and more pre-eminence in music their attitude influenced its general character more and more. Beethoven's earlier work shows the traces of Italian influence, which he got through Mozart, but a great deal of mere sensuous beauty drifted away from it as his powerful nature asserted itself, looking to something deeper than music by itself to justify the doctrine that beauty is essential to art. So, from the widest point of view, we arrive at the division of the story of music's development; and also at a cue which helps us to estimate the true inwardness of the story of art in recent times. The earlier period up till the end of the eighteenth century was that in which the Italian influence was pre-eminent, and with it the pervading aim was sensuous beauty or beauty which had a purely artistic basis. With the beginning of the nineteenth century northern influences began to predominate, and the gravitation towards romanticism began—which is the recognition of the close relation of music to humanity. And with it came the necessity of more decisive characterization which has culminated in our own times.

It follows that Beethoven stands at the parting of the ways. He inherited the traditions of the classical

sonata, and expanded them with astounding insight into their possibilities. But at the same time he made the proximate demise of the sonata inevitable by introducing into it the elements which prefigured the romantic phase of art. The fact that he was fond of considering himself a "tone poet" shows where the path he adopted was leading. For, as has been said many times, the classical sonata is a thing of mainly formal beauty—that is, of beauty of melody and structure; and it is a form which is limited to certain definite and clearly marked principles of procedure, just as is the much-abused aria of the earlier operatic art. But when human expression comes in, the procedure of the composer cannot be limited by certain preordained rules, which prescribe certain things to happen at certain moments. The submission to such rules entails certain failure to interpret psychological development adequately, just as much as the preordained rules of the aria precluded adequate presentation of dramatic developments. In reality Beethoven from the very first unconsciously moved away from the idea of the purely abstract sonata, and during the whole of his career he was moving constantly onwards in the direction of a new type of art, not only expanding the sonata type to its very utmost limits, but in his latest works quite breaking away from the sonata form, and endeavouring to find the scheme for a new kind of art, though still calling his works sonatas and symphonies. He probably had not the very faintest idea to what his course would lead. Not enjoying our advantages in the enlarged range of experience of later art he might even think his romantic ideals were attainable within the limits of the classical

sonata. Independent and even revolutionary as he was, it would nevertheless be hard for him to realize that such an established institution as the sonata was not all-sufficing, and even less would he realize that the types of expression and form of the romantic and the later programme school would all be the outcome of his manipulation of the sonata form, and could not have come into existence except with the classical sonata as an antecedent.

But in respect of this highly important feature, the subject, it is quite clear that Beethoven was impelled from the very first to aim at intrinsic definiteness as contrasted with the old formal definition which depended on clearness of key-statement and cadences, a definiteness which asserted itself by reason of the decisive character of what we must call the *nuclei*. The subject of the very first sonata of all, though it has not much humanity about it, is decisive to a conspicuous degree:—

BEETHOVEN.



In this case the individuality is based on rhythmic vivacity, and the harmony does not count for much. Indeed it might be almost fairly called a one-part subject. A similarly decisive individuality is perceptible in the subject of the Sonata in G, Opus 31,



though there the harmony counts for more; and we already find two types of opposite musical formulas juxtaposed for the purposes of expansion, and they have a sort of psychological coherence—suggesting wilful, rugged vehemence. A nucleus of only two beats in the bar of curiously definite tender character is the plaintive call which is the conspicuous feature of the Sonata in E flat, Opus 31 :—

Of the fierce rhythmic character of the famous subject of the C minor Symphony it is hardly necessary to speak. It is so striking that when



the symphony was first put into rehearsal in Paris in Beethoven's time under Habeneck, the players are said to have burst into a roar of laughter after they had played it. Again there is the tremendous rhythm of the opening bars of the Sonata in B flat, Opus 106,



and of the first movement of the Choral Symphony. In most cases the forcible individuality of these subjects depends on their rhythmic vitality. They certainly do not require the artificial resources of cadences to make them stand out. It is true Beethoven rounds them off and completes them into the orthodox sentence with the recognized cadences; but if the sonata type had not been inevitable in his time, the figures that he used would have always arrested the attention, in whatever form of art they had been employed. It may be admitted that he

did not very often have recourse to the device of characteristic disposition of the harmony in his subjects themselves. The time was scarcely ripe for it; and the resources of composers in less subtle kinds of treatment were as yet not exhausted. One must recall parenthetically the general rule that men do not look for new resources while existing resources are adequate. But his perception of the effects to be produced by such means is sometimes illustrated in the body of his works. An illustration is afforded by the treatment of the first subject of the great Trio in B flat when it is being discussed later on in the movement. Tone quality is also a very prominent factor in the impressiveness of the romantic slow movement of the D major Trio. That his mind was open to the possibilities of modulation as an enhancement of the individuality of the subject is shown by the subject of the first movement of the Eroica Symphony; in which the main effect is produced by the unexpected progression to a chord out of the range of the key, following on a musical formula which in fact represents no more than one single chord, and that the tonic chord, which throws the unexpected note into strong relief, and so prepares it for being one of the most arresting features of the movement. A wider instance of modulation being used in a subject is the first movement of the Sonata in E minor, Opus 90.

Beethoven, as is to be expected of a genius so pre-eminent, anticipated the tendencies of the artistic progress more decisively than the other composers of his time, or even of the time that immediately followed him. The thematic material of such composers as Weber and Mendelssohn naturally occurs



to the mind, especially as they for the most part had something of the nature of a programme in their minds when composing their works for orchestra. The familiar overture to *Der Freischütz*, for instance, contains several illustrations of the use of instrumental colour and chord position to give decisiveness and appositeness to the musical interpretation of the situation; such as the use of the horns in the opening phrase, and the gloomy, fear-some trembling of the strings in the passage dealing with the incantation in the Wolf's Glen. The opening of the overture to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* again serves to illustrate the use of both chord position and instrumental colour to give decisive character to the situation dealt with in musical terms. Both Weber and Mendelssohn were in such cases siding with the romanticists. Schumann's position is a very notable one, and a peculiar one. He came so late to the writing of orchestral music that he never really succeeded in thinking in orchestral terms or casting his ideas in the forms which were most fit to be expressed by the orchestra, and never addressed himself to the search for orchestral effects or curiosities of colour. Yet in writing pianoforte music hardly any composer shows more sensibility to characteristic effects of harmony, and he disposes his chords with the subtlest feeling of appropriateness to the mood he has to illustrate, often even realizing how certain positions of the hand favour the prominence of inner parts. His attitude in relation to thematic material is also peculiar, for he shows the disposition to depart from the traditional principle of building movements on two contrasted subjects, and to adopt the more

psychological coherence of movements based mainly on one characteristic idea sometimes with accessories of minor importance, like many of the movements in Bach's suites. And the subjects themselves always have a human and poetic character which appeals to the hearer in a different sense from the type of the classical sonata.

As we pass from the romantic phase to the more frankly and openly suggestive and programme style of later times, we find further extensions both in the direction of colour and also of modulation in thematic material. Of the modulatory principle, which widens the sphere of the subject, the examples become more frequent. We may take the subject of Liszt's Concerto in A,



as an example in instrumental music. But more copious become the examples in Wagner's works, where he quite clearly employs the subtle relation of keys and intermingling of tonalities as a means of expression of mystery and deep feeling. Many motives in the music dramas illustrate this appropriately. In the Nibelung Trilogy we may note the motive of the magic ring,



the motive of the Tarnhelm,



the motive of the magic kiss of Wotan,



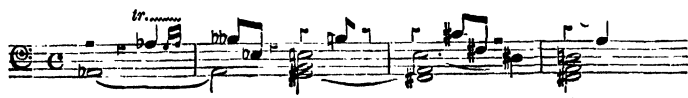
and in *Tristan*, the death motive,



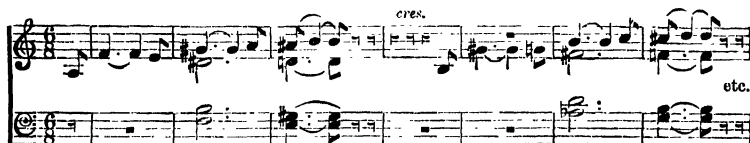
and in *Parsifal* the motive of the "innocent fool,"



transformed soon afterwards in Gurnemanz's mood of annoyance to



and as one of the most vivid examples of a subject which stands out by its intrinsic decisiveness, the motive of the love potion in *Tristan*, which is also one of the most conspicuous examples of a subject being made acutely characteristic by instrumental colour of a strangely composite kind :—



The greatest representative of the purer and severer forms of art, Johannes Brahms, supplies copious illustration of the use of the devices already indicated, to give character to his subjects. Indeed in one particular there is hardly any composer whose individuality is more consistently asserted by the colour of the harmony which results from the position of component notes of the chords. A certain disdain of the softer and more sensuous and alluring positions seems almost always to be present. Strength, sternness, even a grand harshness is more to his taste than mere sensuous beauty; and his thematic material is thus not only amply diversified, but is also different from every one else's thematic material. In the matter of introducing modulation into the subject he is also illuminative, for he delights in gliding off to unexpected places in tonality to widen the horizon. We may take the example of the subject of the first movement of the violin Sonata in A,



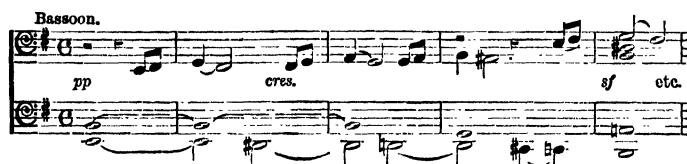
and the Rhapsody in G minor, which obviously follows the plan of the subject of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in E minor, Opus 90.

It seems more convincing to find examples of such procedures in Brahms' works than in the works of other composers of recent times, as he was so conspicuously reticent and proud a composer that he never condescended to cheap cleverness to astonish the superficially intelligent.

The evidence we get from still more recent composers is copious. The semi-oriental condition of Russian music, with its exuberance and voracity of every sort of sensuous experience, naturally provides ample variety of choice for making subjects characteristic.

Races with a touch of the oriental in their habits show great aptitude for instrumental expression and colour, and in these respects Tschaikowsky outpaces all previous composers; and hardly any composer has ever used instrumental colour with such intensity for the expression of human feeling. We need go no further than the familiar Pathetic Symphony for illustrations of the use of colour and chord position. The opening in which the instruments are used for purposes of expressive effect in positions of the scale

hardly ever used before, gives the impression of the very profoundest mental gloom ;



while the opening bars of the last movement express with supreme completeness the despair which must accompany the admission of incapacity of self-mastery, which sounds to those who look back in later times to be a prophetic anticipation of subsequent events :—



It is like the cry of a man realizing his helplessness in the face of a predisposition towards some special overmastering temptation, than which surely nothing can beget more absolute despair. The fact that the emotional and temperamental qualities of Russians are much more in evidence, and influence their actions more readily than western races who have such things more under control, makes them superb subjects for literature—and it seems not less for music. For having found themselves in musical speech, and having adopted the methods of western races, they apply them with unexampled vivacity and with an abandon and renunciation of self-restraint which make the characteristics of their artistic methods grossly patent. And their work therefore illustrates in a high degree the tendencies of art which have been summarized, whether in

Tschaïkowsky's work or in that of Borodine or Rimsky - Korsakoff or Rachmaninoff or the more reticent and dignified Glazounow.

Of the composers of the more self-contained races it is hardly necessary to extenuate prominent reference to so conspicuous a composer as Richard Strauss. His popularity is mainly founded on the extreme manner in which he makes use of all the resources of the orchestra to give characteristic individuality to his subjects, and to intensify the expression of every kind of thought, whether it is the exaltation of the heroic soul, the abstraction of the philosopher, the humour of Sancho Panza, or the uproar and passion of German domesticity. In these the resources of intermingled tonalities and of chord positions are employed without stint, as well as all the possibilities and approximate impossibilities of orchestral effect. By such means the range of definition and difference in thematic material seem to be carried out to the utmost extreme. But it will be remembered that the process of evolution is continuous and unbroken in this department of art. It is through the access of more and more resources, which extend the range of possible diversity, that the individuality of thematic material can be made more decisive. And the outcome is to change the conditions of the musical subject, and to make it serve for altogether different purposes from those which it served prior to Beethoven's time. Subjects become the concentrated embodiment of the composer's inmost thought; and serve analogous purposes to those of pregnantly grouped words, but far more widely spread, and covering more ground than words can do. It will have been seen that the attitude of composers

towards their thematic material has for long been steadily changing. From being regarded at first as quite of subordinate importance, the manner of employment of subjects in fugue, especially by J. S. Bach, prefigured under contrapuntal conditions their extreme importance and prominence as the real embodiment of the meaning of the movements; which revived in vastly more decisive manner, after temporary abeyance in the latest phases of musical drama and rhapsodistic instrumental compositions. And whereas in the days of the classical sonata, as has been pointed out, the subjects had been long passages deliberately and formally spaced out with cadences to indicate their limits, the progress of things tended to condense the subject into a short and concise figure or musical nucleus and to dispense with cadences as superfluous; since the mind proved to have the capacity to recognize a subject for its intrinsic individuality rather than for its formal limitations. But in the musical drama cadences were superfluous and obstructive, and the so-called leitmotive were better without them. In fact the more concisely they embodied what they had to express the more easily they could be handled. It must be obvious that the principles on which leitmotive were invented and used would be impossible if each subject were to be formally laid out and defined by a cadence. Nearly all Wagner's leitmotive are very short, sometimes less than a bar in length, though repetition of the characteristic figure either directly (*e.g.* that of Mime) or in sequences seems at times to make them longer. The procedure of the new kind of instrumental art is little more than a transference of Wagner's methods to the sphere of the concert-room.



But where there is no dialogue or scenic accessories to give the minds of the audience a cue, it is obvious that heavy demands are made upon the composers to find means of arresting the attention and supplying something that the average mind can retain. So it is not surprising that in addition to all the accumulated resources applied to giving thematic material strong individuality, composers show a decided disposition for introducing peculiarly pungent and startling intervals or chords into their subjects. The procedure is sanctified by the example of Heinrich Schütz, and the very first chord which reaches the ear in the Vorspiel of *Tristan* is a conspicuous illustration. But in the latest music it seems as though composers who appeal to a wide public feel it to be a necessity to startle the ear by something uncanny and unfamiliar, and compel attention thereby. Strauss again necessarily supplies the most examples which have received general recognition; and even in such a simple example as "Till Eulenspiegel's merry pranks" the feature in question presents itself at the very outset:—



which becomes



Here the feature which arrests attention in the first subject presented is a diminished fifth in the melody—the same interval and, in fact, the same group of

notes which Wagner used in the most passionate period of the love duet in *Tristan and Isolde* :—



The same interval makes its appearance in one of the most conspicuous themes in *Also sprach Zarathustra* :—



*Tod und Verklärung* gives a very striking example in the most imposing subject,



and the point is varied in a later recurrence of the subject so as to emphasize the salient feature to the extent of being positively excruciating, as it is surely intended to be. In the first theme of the *Heldenleben* the melodic figures jump about to all the most startling and most unlikely points of the scale in order to arrest attention and also to suggest exaltation and vigour :—



And one of the subordinate themes is made up of melodic progressions representing all the most extreme intervals of the scale, irrespective of tonality,



and this subject is also aggravated in later appearances. A leap of a diminished twelfth makes its appearance in another theme in the same work. Our quaint old friend *Don Quixote* is a most apt subject for artistic distortion, and a very happy example is presented in the fascinating close of a passage more or less representing D major in the introduction, which a very enlightened critic supposes to represent the Don's aptitude for getting bewildered:—



In the very opening of the *Sinfonia Domestica* the strange effect of an intrusive rising minor seventh in melody presents itself,



and there is a good deal of insistence on such extreme intervals as augmented fifths and major sevenths. Extraordinary wide leaps arrest the attention in another subject:—



Such devices are to be met with in every direction. The need for some pungent interval in the subject seems in the earlier stages of this new music to be an almost inevitable consequence of abandoning the cadences which used to help the average mind to recognize the limits of the subject. But the trick of arresting the attention by a physically exciting effect seems to be liable to a nemesis. For the result of continuing such a practice would be to cause the physical effect to diminish, and the subjects in order to maintain their effect on the organism would have to be made up of nothing but the most aggressive intervals.<sup>1</sup> We can hardly contemplate the situation with complacency. It seems possible that a reaction might ensue, and composers might revert to thematic material of less aggressive type if public understanding enlightened by manifold experience attained to the taste for more deeply felt and more widely spaced appeals to the finer qualities of artistic intelligence. For it cannot be doubted that the vast resources of artistic method which have now been developed

<sup>1</sup> The most conspicuous illustration of this tendency is the recent vogue of what is called the whole-toned scale, the peculiarity of which is that it gets rid of the simple fourth and perfect fifth, and substitutes a sharp fourth and an augmented fifth, two of the most aggressive intervals available in the modern musical system.

would serve equally for thematic material which did not rely upon over-accentuation to make an appeal to the suffrages of the increasing host of those who find something more than mere pleasure in the modern art.

It will possibly occur to the memory that it has been said that the characteristic of some of the finest and most enduring melodies in existence is conjunct motion. Conjunct motion has deep and ancient associations. "God save the King" is almost all in conjunct motion, so is "Alla Trinita Beata," so are many of the finest German chorales; so is the great tune in the Ninth Symphony. There is hardly anything so suggestive as the change in melodic type which has been induced by the influence of the widening audience of modern times, which has lost hold on the associations of great art of the past, upon the latter-day composer.

## XIV

### THE SPHERE OF TEMPERAMENT

It might seem better to follow up the discussion of the evolution of thematic material at once by the technical discussion of its uses. But these uses are influenced by circumstances which are not purely technical or practical, and before we can understand the complicated story, it is well to consider the nature and sphere of those influences which lie in the nature of human temperament.

Temperament appears to be a comparatively recent discovery; and like most novelties which attract attention and become fashionable it has been for a time a little too conspicuous, and people are possibly getting tired of it. It is in the same category as heredity, and both of them have had heavier responsibilities laid upon them than they are fit to carry. But when things which have been fashionable are going out of fashion is just the moment for people who do not care the least whether a thing is fashionable or not to consider whether their vogue was purely a matter of fashion or had more permanent and substantial foundations.

The word hardly needs definition or extenuation. It is justified on the grounds of utility by daily experience; and we are all getting to realize that it

is better to know a thing by its fruits than by any amount of speculative analysis and theory. Its fruits are daily before us. Whenever any one habitually makes the lives of all his neighbours, as well as those of his own household, a burden to them, every one treats him with loving-kindness and mercy on the grounds that he cannot help it, as it is his temperament. Whenever any one invariably thinks and acts in a manner which is contrary to all the dictates of reasonable foresight and prudence every one perceives that his mental eyes see things out of focus, and that the laws of perspective have become distorted; and they know that this is the effect of temperament again, which in such cases is a law unto itself.

But we must give it its due. When an actor, performer, orator, preacher, politician or humorist inspires thousands with the fervour of ecstatic enthusiasm it is temperament again. It is not the abstract justice of causes or the soundness of arguments which prevail, but the terms of temperament in which they are presented. An appeal to the imagination is a thousandfold more powerful than an appeal to the understanding. No one was ever yet permanently converted, persuaded or aroused to action by the mere cold glare of truth and reason. Till something which appeals to the deepest human instincts is mixed up with argument human nature can hardly be induced to take notice of facts at all. The conditions prevail in art as elsewhere; for though it be ever so logical and complete, ever so perfect and flawless in beauty, it fails of its object unless it somehow appeals to the humanity of those to whom it is addressed. Indeed, in that connection one may take it that it is a mistake to suppose that it is the business of art to be perfect

at all. One might almost say rather that it is the business and object of art to be imperfect in certain honourable and interesting ways. Counsels of perfection always imply a recognition of the fact that we shall never attain to it. The art of living happily consists mainly in the constancy of our aspirations after the unattainable, and in the consolation that the peculiar form of incompleteness in the result is explained by honourable motives. In other words, the most permanent criterion of art as of life should be, not whether it can be discussed in its logical and mechanical aspects without betraying flaws, but whether the temperamental qualities which are betrayed by its imperfections are such as inspire us with instinctive love and admiration and not with loathing and disgust. The commercialism which was the blight of the art of the nineteenth century was not only poisonous on the grounds of faulty technique but because it manifested temperamental conditions which were sordid, base and false ; while much of the most adorable art known to us is so because through all its imperfections there shine out the truth, sincerity, and beauty of the impulses which were its sources.

But, to come to more close quarters with the question, there are reasons why temperament should be more in evidence at certain points in art's history than others. Almost everything that man achieves is achieved in three marked and obvious phases. It does not matter whether it is in games, or art, or social life, or any other exercise of muscles or faculties, the first phase of activity is spontaneous and unconscious of means ; the second is the development of consciousness of means, and the third the mastery of means. In the first the attention is solely directed to the end



aimed at, and the human creature is not conscious of the machinery which has to be used to attain it. The tyro in art makes his early experiments by the light of nature without any realized knowledge of principles or methods, even without consciousness of the actual processes he employs; just as a boy or novice strikes at a well-known ball without a knowledge of a right or wrong way, and often makes a better result than when he knows the right way. The second phase is the development of consciousness of means, implied by finding out a right way of using them. It is obvious that in order to use mechanical appliances properly the mind must be projected towards them and concentrated upon them, and is consequently distracted from the object for which they are to be used. The situation may be defined as the endeavour to add the fruits of countless other men's experiences to the original instinctive individual outfit, to adjust the appliances required in such a manner as mankind have found to be most effectual, and to project intelligence or use limbs or muscles in such ways as have been proved to attain better results than the individual light of nature. The third stage is when the methods are mastered, knowledge of principles assimilated, all the machinery made compliant, and the limbs act the right way and the mind thinks the right way without conscious effort. Then the artist or the sportsman returns to his first condition of quasi-spontaneous activity, with powers enhanced by the assimilation of principles of right action. As every one is aware, few people pass successfully through the three phases. The weak and the indolent remain blissfully in the first phase. The more determined and the more conscientious get into

the second phase, where most people who have any individuality are vastly uncomfortable, and many altogether stick fast, in sports as well as art; and just the few, pre-eminently gifted with persistency, devotion, patience and courage win their way into the third phase.

The point in relation to our present subject is that the first stage is one in which pure unadulterated temperament is likely to be found, because primitive impulses have not been reined in and regulated. In the second phase temperament is least likely to be met with because individuality is being subordinated to general principles, and the energies are controlled and limited to certain specific aims. In the third stage temperament makes its reappearance according to the capacity of the nature to survive the self-conscious period, and the manner in which necessary principles have been assimilated. The reason for considering the phases of development which individuals have to pass through is that mankind at large passes through the same phases as the individual. The processes which are gone through by the individual man are to be found everywhere because man is no exception to the universal persistence and unchangeableness of law. Nations and races have their phase of unconscious spontaneity, their phase of consciousness, and their phase of maturity. The lower races never succeed in rising out of the first phase. They are always at the mercy of vagaries of temperament, and the primitive instincts peculiar to them, which cause them to behave so as to bring uncomfortable consequences upon themselves and the people they have to deal with. The races a stage higher pass into the phase where they are tied

and bound by the letter of ordinances and conventions, and only the highest races arrive approximately at the state of reasonable liberty, when laws and ordinances are interpreted in the light of such common-sense as fits with their idiosyncrasies.

The same order of procedure applies to the development of art. The first phase is that of unconsciously uttered folk-song, when temperamental peculiarities are in evidence, though not much differentiated, because the resources of art at that stage are so limited. The second stage is the conscious period when principles are being unravelled, during which theorists run riot and conventions rule supreme, and art is not unfrequently stupefied; and the third is the stage when methods and principles have been mastered and the composer becomes free to express what really is in him. The second and third periods frequently overlap, because one type of art is so often just beginning its existence when another is just coming to perfection. While Palestrina and Lasso were illustrating the culmination of one kind of art, Cavaliere and Caccini were just delving at the elements of another kind. While Handel and Bach were putting the coping-stones on another type the earlier writers of classical sonatas were just babbling their infantile twaddle in sonata forms; and when Haydn was just beginning his wonderful series of quartets and symphonies a great part of the world was delighting in such childish programme music as "The Battle of Prague."

If we observe with discrimination we shall find that whenever a scheme of art is sufficiently rich in development to be called mature, and artistic methods are plentiful, temperament comes in. We

are probably most of us conscious that the early period of the classical sonata is rather conspicuously untemperamental. The types of design were too strict and of too regular application to admit of much temperament being displayed. Mozart's earlier works display extremely little in the way of temperament; and though he developed some temperamental qualities in the troubles of his later years, one could hardly call him a temperamental composer at any time. Haydn was more temperamental, but then all his best work came after Mozart's time. Beethoven's career epitomizes the story of the transition from the second phase, when conformity with established rule is most in evidence, to the final phases of personal assertion. In his first period the love of mere beauty predominates: beauty of art pure and simple without much admixture of human feeling. In his second phase passionate human warmth of emotion makes its appearance. The temperamental asserts itself and expands the scheme of classical design without actually breaking away from it. In his third period the classical scheme gives way under the stress of the temperamental impulses. No longer satisfied with a regular set design anticipated and accepted as adequate for all the purposes of art, he seeks for new schemes of organization, for new manipulations of the elastic form of the fugue, for new developments of the variations form. His subjects appear in a new guise and have a temperamental basis instead of a mere structural function. In the early stage of the pure classical sonata the subjects had the office of helping the mind to grasp the nature of the design, by calling attention to the essential points of con-

struction. In Beethoven's latest phase the subject becomes so pregnant with meaning that it dominates the design. It became as unnatural for the composer to submit to the regular order of the sonata type as it was for the operatic composers who had any dramatic sense to submit to the conventions of the operatic aria. It was a necessity for them thenceforward to find the ground principles upon which a type was founded instead of merely taking a type as a model. The classical sonata was an admirable type and a fine application of certain fundamental principles, but it was not more, and would not in all cases fit the new revelations of temperament, which urged men to take a wider view of principles of organization in order to carry out consistently and logically the consequences of the meanings of their subjects. And in this connection it is well to remember the manner in which all the resources of art had gradually been brought into the service of the subject, to enable it to be more characteristic and to mean more, as has been fully pointed out in previous chapters. Temperamental considerations imply a new way of dealing with the subjects as almost a prime necessity, and as an inevitable consequence of the greater vitality of the subjects themselves.

It is not much use, as has been before said, to theorize on what art ought to be. The instinct of successive generations of composers is always more powerful than any amount of reasoning. Almost all composers who have achieved anything which widens the scheme of art have been decried by the exponents of artistic morality. So it was with Monteverde at the beginning of the seventeenth

century, so with Gluck in the eighteenth, so with Beethoven in his latest and most interesting phase, so with Schumann and Brahms and Wagner. Almost every young composer who has any genuine personality finds to his cost that the adherents of correctitude are against him, and no advance has ever been made under the guise of submission to theoretic canons of propriety. Our own English shortcomings in the matter of musical art have been mainly owing to our tradition of suppressing and concealing temperamental impulses. Our performers have failed less for lack of technical aptitude than through submitting to the unwritten English law that the expression of strong feeling is unseemly. It has often stifled us and reduced our efforts to barren mechanical conventionality. Respectability obliterates individuality and reduces everything to the dreary level of monotonous barrenness. But nothing is achieved in art without personality, and personality is the sum of temperament. If we look back over the course of history the men who stand out in the long vista are those whose personality is manifested most strongly and consistently in their achievements. It even goes as far back as the Hebrew prophets. And if we think of the great painters, of Mantegna, Holbein, Michel Angelo, Titian, Velasquez, Van Eyk, Albert Dürer, our own Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, Cotman, Morland, Turner, Watts, and, in music, of Monteverde, Schütz, Bach, Purcell, Gluck, Beethoven, Weber, Brahms, Wagner, they are all temperamental in the highest degree, personal, indubitably individual. These are the facts that teach us better than the abstract reasoning of theorists and critics, and they show that a pennyworth of humanity is worth all the

great manifestations of mere ingenuity and cleverness. No doubt supreme dexterity in art is dazzling. But yet we instinctively distrust the dexterity of the mere virtuoso, and bow down rightly before the man who clearly has something great and sincere to tell us, even if he bungle and stumble in the telling. Individual temperament makes the difference between the mere mechanic and the genuine artist. The mechanical craftsman makes, possibly skilfully, what he is set to do, either by a taskmaster or by conventions and mechanical rules. The man who fills up types of design with dexterous application of formulas of detail may be a good craftsman. He does not become a composer or a painter or a poet till he uses the methods that are made available by countless artists in the past to express, truthfully and essentially, himself. And herein lies one of the clues to the baseness of commercial art. It has no foundation in personality, but is concocted by jumbling up the phrases and external traits of true personalities to gull the public and secure their money. It is mere fraudulent misrepresentation, and always bears indubitable marks of the falseness and baseness of its object. It would not be safe to say that no man can keep his eye on the public with the commercial aim of making money by his effusions and still keep his personality; for some men are so fortunate as to attract the public by their artistic personality. But in such a case the thirst for pelf is part of the temperament; and invariably betrays itself in the lower standard of thought and conception which is manifested by the music produced under such conditions, and the lower standard of artistic sincerity. The man who has his eye on his profits puts into his

work just so much as will serve to attain the commercial aim and no more.

We may get a side light on this question of the sphere of temperament by considering it shortly in connection with performers and actors. In this connection people sometimes deprecate it as liable to lead to disloyalty to the composer or dramatist whose work it is the duty of the performer or actor to interpret. But in music and in the drama there are thousands of things which the composer and the poet cannot set down. True it is that both in music and the drama the tendency has been to set down more and more in detail just what the composer or the dramatist wants in all sorts of accessories. But no amount of most minute directions can cover the whole ground, and where there is room left for individual inferences temperament comes in. One need only think of such familiar characters as Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Falstaff, Antony, even Dogberry and the ancient Pistol, to feel how wide the sphere of temperament is for the choice of the particular interpretation which approves itself to the individual. So with the great performers—Rubinstein's and Bülow's renderings of a great sonata by Beethoven inevitably differed entirely the one from the other, and the readings of great works by great conductors differ in like manner. If they had not a personal view of the way in which the work was to be dealt with their interpretation would lack most of its value. The perfectly exact and faithful reproduction of what is set down on paper is not what is wanted of a great interpreter. We want his interpretation to tell us something which widens our horizon, something which makes



us realize more fully the interest and greatness of the work interpreted. It may be contended that the doctrine is a perilous one if it is applied to the ordinary ruck of mortals; but it is also perilous to cross a street when cabs are running riot therein. But people do take the risk when they want to get to the other side. We should not condemn their venturing across the street but rather their manner of doing it. It is the same with the principle of interpreting music or the drama in the light of individual temperament. When an absolutely incompetent person presents his temperamental view of some great work of Beethoven's, even if the public welcome it as a novelty, there are always sufficient sane people left to see that the foolish and inadequate presumption gets its due meed of appraisal. Reasonable men would not on that account condemn the principle of interpreting in the light of temperament, but the inadequacy of the individual interpreter.

In this connection it might be as well to recall the scheme of the three phases of artistic development. We can recall that the primitive amateur who does not attempt to get out of the first phase often hungers to give his fellow-men his interpretation of some great work of art. And though he may not have an exact knowledge of the difference between a crotchet and a dotted quaver it not unfrequently happens that his suggestions, for they do not amount to more, are far more interesting than those of the earnest artist who has toiled far enough into the second phase to be deeply conscious of the difference between a semiquaver and a double-dotted demi-semiquaver, and is paralysed by the magnitude of the discovery. In the latter phase the freedom and individuality of

the conscientious aspirant are suspended during the martyrdom of apprenticeship that he may arrive at the dignity of mastership through suffering. To be quite consistent he ought to be locked up while he is passing through the second phase, for as long as his temperamental individuality is in abeyance he is only saying his lessons. And if he ever does attain to the dignity of mastership the joy of giving rein to a chastened and well-nurtured temperament with vastly increased resources will amply repay him. But, as every one is aware, very few arrive at the third phase with any individuality or independence of mind left; and the rest continue saying their lessons, and we are conscious that the futility which we feel in their performance is the lack of the individuality of temperament. So that finally one may say that if a man has not something of his own to express through the works which he interprets he cannot hope to convey to the minds of his hearers the true meaning and effect of other people's intentions.

The highest mission of the performer is to be an interpreter, and, with absolute knowledge and fidelity to the text of what he has to present, to superimpose, by the bounty of his own nature, what will make other people's understanding and knowledge of what they hear more spacious. It is a sort of process of assimilation and reproduction, and the performer only does justice to another man's work by making it first his own. And in composition itself the situation is identical. It urgently invites every one with any natural gift for musical utterance to express his individual self, if he has one. It is mere waste of time to try to express some one else's, because it is sure to be better done by that some one else. The

tendency of things in these days is not such as to favour supreme individual achievements like those of the great heroes of art, but to encourage the diffusion of the service of art among thousands, who through it have the opportunity to express their own individual views of the world, of the problems of their lives, and the meaning of what they see around them. If they are all so assimilated by the duty of being and acting just like other people that their temperament is suppressed, there can be no possible use in their trying to express themselves at all. It is not a question now of achieving greatness but of being content with independence. The situation in literature is illuminating. People complain that there are no great authors. We have had them and that should be sufficient. Now there are thousands of writers who have eyes to see what their fellow-creatures are doing, and try to interpret to us what they see. They make real to us for our good what happens in slums, what happens on the seas, in the wilds; they lift the veil of the most intimate psychological phenomena of Italians, Russians, French, and Americans, and make us realize how the same temperamental ingredients mixed in different proportions can produce such astounding diversities of result. And there is also a new kind of composer presenting himself, surging with rebellion against all the respectabilities of tradition and against the evidences of what the great ones of the past thought consistent with the dignity of art, and presenting to us their particular temperamental qualities in frank and sometimes surprisingly unconventional terms. The latest phase seems, indeed, to be in accordance with Rousseau's advice, a reversion to the native wood-

man wild ; slightly, even scantily clad, and resentful of any kind of constraint. The principle is consistent with the course of art's evolution ; which is, as has been said so often, inevitably towards the greater differentiation. In respect of the art-producers it is in the progress from the different utterances of the mighty few to the differences of the temperamental conditions of the multitude of individuals. The social conditions of our time do not invite the large conceptions, the deliberate processes, the splendid coherent spacious designs of Bach and Beethoven. What they demand is moments ; moments instinct with any genuine temperamental vitality, and so disposed as to be consistent with the headlong, eager, hasty, confused energies of people awakening to their liberties and their rights to recognition as individual beings. The recognition of the right of the individual in art is the acceptance by his fellows of his exposition of his own temperamental qualities. How this affects the treatment of those important items, the subjects, may be considered hereafter in detail.

It can only be added here that temperamental as distinct from structural employment of the subject finds its justification in John Sebastian Bach, and that Beethoven prefigured the methods of the prophets of the latest phase of modern art in those later works of his which more especially indicate the emergence of his particular and wonderful temperament.

For the rest, though the prospect of a multitudinous pandemonium of individual bundles of temperament may be a little alarming, one may recall that temperament comprises the very noblest and highest attributes of human character as well as the

basest. Morality in art is much the same as in general life. One may adapt a famous French saying and put it "that the more we truly know the greater becomes the scope of our charity." It is better at least to see even baseness frankly expressed than to be deceived by its masquerading in the guise of respectability. But it is quite a subordinate function of temperament to counteract respectability. No sphere is more comprehensive. Say rather it serves to remind us that art is human and to keep art human.

It is through temperament that art is identifiable with the personality of the producer. It is through temperament that art, literature, and life too, are progressive. It is through temperament that music appeals to the widest range of humanity.

Yet temperament is not art, and we must turn to the art itself to find surely how temperament comes to play such a great part in its manifestations.

## XV

### FUNCTIONS OF THEMATIC MATERIAL

#### I

PEOPLE who are interested in many things are painfully liable to the humiliating imputation of being mere smatterers. The speed with which facts and theories based on facts accumulate is paralysing. We can none of us know the best ten thousand books; and what are ten thousand among the hundreds of thousands in dozens of languages which could easily appear to a conscientious man to be indispensable to his venturing to have a decisive personal opinion even about simple subjects which touch his life daily?

It is best to face the inevitable fact that there must be different kinds of knowledge for different kinds of people; and those who enjoy the honourable distinction of suffering from over susceptible consciences may take comfort in reflecting that facts in themselves are not knowledge, and that the indiscriminate accumulation of them is almost as bad as indiscriminate charity; for the more a man has of them, if he cannot sort them, the worse he is off. To the specialist it is indispensable to have intimate familiarity with endless facts and details of his own subject. But the people to whom it is important to

know something of many subjects must be content to take most of their facts ready made up into bundles and systematized. It is part of the business of specialists to make up the details into bundles ready for the use of those who want to understand, and sometimes to generalize on the basis of generalizations. The knowledge which people need who look at subjects mainly from outside is the knowledge of the coherent relation of details to one another, and their best chance of avoiding either smattering or submergence by the multitude of small realities is to keep the facts at bay and to see them from sufficiently far off to get a good many of them into the field of mental vision at the same time. The advantage of seeing things from a suitable distance is that the mind is helped to realize how they stand in relation to one another and how they combine to make a spacious result or comprehensive effect. It is disconnectedness which makes smattering. Directly a few facts are understood in the true inwardness of their connection smattering begins to be superseded by knowledge.

Yet even facts can easily be over-depreciated. To the eager mind which revels in wild and cosmic generalizations they are sometimes useful for purposes of disintegration; and in the domains of more responsible thinking they are also serviceable, because theory always withers into dry bones and dust if it is not frequently vivified by the touch of practical realities. The consideration of the evolution of thematic material necessarily entailed much attention to details and minutiae. The consideration of the various functions of such details may supply the corrective, and induce a more spacious attitude of mind. The methods of employment of saliently

characteristic formulas or passages of melody and harmony and harmonized melody which are commonly called subjects are among the most widely reaching features of musical art, and to understand them is to hold the clue to a vast range of various kinds of art, and criterions whereby the qualities and periods of works of art may be gauged. The simplicity of the story of the evolution of thematic functions shows how various facts may be referred to various categories; and how particular strata of art may be identified, like geological strata, by their individual organic phenomena. The familiar story of progress from the indefinite to the definite and from the simple to the complex is manifested. There was a nebulous inchoate condition in art as elsewhere, a condition in which thematic material did not present itself, and in which consequently there was no systematic organization and no plan. The analogy to the precipitation or crystallization of diffused elements into solids in the formation of planets is obvious, for thematic materials became more definite and afforded more opportunities of organization as the differentiation of ingredients proceeded. The human mind only attained to the capacity of recognizing a musical formula as a sort of subject by very slow degrees, and it showed its undeveloped pleasure thereupon by simply reiterating it. Then as mental powers grew attempts were made to present the reiteration in some kind of order like a pattern; then by degrees the mind grew to the capacity of recognizing more than one subject or salient formula, and of devising more varied patterns by the disposition of two such formulas of melody in relation to one another. The introduction of a second thematic unit enhanced the possibilities of



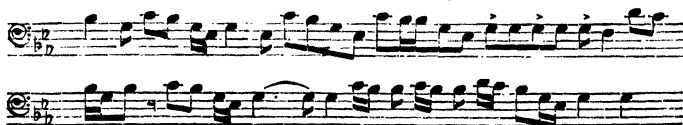
organization, and the addition of a third did so yet further. And inasmuch as each addition adds to the complexity of the structure it implies a growth of capacity in the human mind to think of several things at a time and to feel the relations of musical formulas intelligently disposed to one another. So even in an elementary stage as soon as such formulas are so arranged as to make an intelligible pattern the two-fold aspect of art as appealing to and satisfying the intellectual as well as the emotional qualities is apparent.

The first phase of thematic material is plentifully illustrated in the folk music of primitive and savage races. It is even possible to watch the gradual emergence from primitive howls like those of animals towards the definiteness of short musical phrases or formulas; and to feel sympathy with the condition of mind which reiterated and toyed with them in an innocent and childish manner. The difficulty which undeveloped minds have in thinking of more than one thing at a time and controlling their temperamental impulses in relation to consequences is illustrated by the incoherent manner in which the fragments of rhythmic tune were sometimes repeated:—

CHINESE—sung to a missionary by school children.



ZUNI INDIAN—phonographed.



The growth of intelligence is manifested in the gradual

approximation to appreciable order in the disposition of the formulas; as in the following Catalan tune:—



But it is fairly certain that no purely savage races ever realize the requirements of well-balanced adjustment of phrases so as to satisfy critical analysis. In other words, savage races do not produce what are called complete tunes, with definite beginnings and some kind of development and ends which have definite relation to the beginnings. When their music goes on for a long time it either rambles incoherently, or repeats the same little fragment of tune over and over again as near the same pitch as the performers can keep. It is only races who have acquired a certain development and a capacity for looking before and after who can attain even to the degree of artistic coherence which constitutes the simplest complete piece of music in the shape of an unaccompanied melody. The intellectual element of orderliness makes its appearance as soon as the race attains to some kind of reasoning faculty, and we can almost gauge the aptitude of races for using their minds by the degree in which definite principles of orderliness manifest themselves in their folk-tunes. The singular complexity of the organization of some of the Scotch folk-tunes, for instance, might fairly be taken as a sort of premonition of the aptitude which that astute people display for subtlety of reasoning, and their exceptional appreciation of the value of education:—

## SCOTCH, TRADITIONAL—North-Eastern Counties.



The higher organization implies either that a single thematic unit is rendered capable of presenting different aspects or having more than one significance through its relation to its context; or that there shall be more than one thematic unit to supply the basis of organization by varying the relation of definite phrases. The latter was of necessity the latest to arrive; but it does not therefore supply the basis of a higher kind of organization than movements or songs founded on one thematic unit. It implies a higher type of intelligence than the primitive single-unit folk-songs in early stages; but in the most advanced forms of modern art the work based upon a single subject is often more highly organized, more poetical, and more interesting than many works which are crowded with subjects.

It will not be necessary to dwell longer on the gradual emergence of folk music from indefinite incoherence to clearness and order—partly because exactly the same processes are manifested in the evolution of art music. The type of movement which is based on two or more subjects or thematic units occupies a very prominent position in modern art, but its consideration will come more aptly after consideration of the manifold phases which the type of work which is based on only one theme has gone

through. This type of movement or tune or song persists through the whole story of music, from the most primitive stages up to the most highly organized, and the phases it has passed through are very enlightening. For whereas in primitive conditions the reiteration of a single thematic unit was often used without intelligent or reasoning purpose, as art proceeded it was used more and more as a means of organization, to unify the work of art and serve as a basis of mechanical consistency; and in the later phases it was made to give consistency of mood and feeling and a kind of modal atmosphere as well. The counterpart of the primitive savage procedure of repeating a phrase over and over again is found in art music in the crude and even rather absurd form favoured by instrumental composers of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean times, which was known as the "Ut, Re, Mi, Fa." This form has already been referred to in Chapter IV., but it requires further consideration here. It occupies just the same position in art music as phrase repetition does in folk music and for the same reasons. In both cases men had not arrived at any idea of principles of organization; and in default, not knowing what to do if they stopped repeating the same formula, continued to do so as long as the music went on. The Elizabethan form was if anything more futile than the type in primitive folk music, as in the latter the repeated phrase had some significance; but the Elizabethan formula had none. It is, in fact, a very curious instance of inversion of the usual order of evolution, as the principle of reiteration is really presented without the thematic material.

The same principle, organized a step higher, is

illustrated in the ground bass, which is merely a definite formula of more genuine musical significance repeated over and over again in the bass with similar superimposition of all the variety of passages which the composer can devise to fit on to it. This type of really primitive organization is met with conspicuously in the period when art was not sufficiently developed to have attained any great variety of resourcefulness of organization, before the principle of the sonata type had taken shape in men's minds. We find it favoured by such composers as Lulli, Purcell, Legrenzi, Stradella. It was the basis of the Chaconne form, which forms such an important feature in strings of ballet tunes, as in Lulli's operas, and in Purcell's *King Arthur*; it was also used by both these composers as the basis of songs. And while the sonata types were yet inchoate it was employed with glorious effect by Buxtehude and J. S. Bach in Passacaglias, and it has been illustrated with superb effect in recent times in the Finale of Brahms' *Orchestral Variations* on the theme by Haydn.

The principle of reiteration of a short and definite phrase is presented as soon as composers began to realize the essential necessities of instrumental style, whether in accompaniment or in the actual texture of pure instrumental composition.

A very interesting side light is afforded on the genesis of our modern symphony by the employment of the reiterative procedure in early instrumental works. As has often been stated, that pre-eminent type owes its origin to the overtures in several short movements which preceded the early Italian operas. In the overture to the *Prigionier fortunato*

by Alessandro Scarlatti, which is in three movements, the central slow movement is entirely based on the reiteration of a single figure by the violoncellos :—



And it so happens that the central slow movement of Mozart's very first symphony, written in Chelsea when he was a little boy, is based on the same principle; as the only thematic feature is the little phrase which is repeated with variations in the bass, while the rest of the music, as in Scarlatti's case, is a mere sequence of harmonies :—



presenting the nucleus formula even more consistently further on, as follows :—



But between Scarlatti and Mozart comes J. S. Bach, who illustrates the same principle in a superb manner in the slow movement of the Italian concerto, which was avowedly based on Italian instrumental models. Here we come upon a new phase, when the reiteration of a decisive musical figure supplies the basis of continuity to a rhapsodical melody to which it serves as the accompaniment. This type was a favourite with the great J. S. Bach; and he not only employs it in instrumental compositions, but for the double purpose of conveying a principle of mechanical consistency and suggesting a special atmosphere or mood in the accompaniment of free vocal compositions. The most beautiful examples of this method are sundry recitatives in the Passion according to St. Matthew, such as the "Du lieber Heiland Du" and the deeply expressive "Ach Golgatha," where the use of the little combined figures given to the oboe d'amore and the violoncellos fulfils many functions of expression, coherence and technical interest. The procedure in such more mature examples introduced a new element into the system of organization. Every one is aware of the singular effect which persistent reiteration of a sentence or phrase or a formula of words or

an epigram has upon the human organism. It is a trick well known to playwrights, public speakers, and preachers. Up to a certain point it causes the effect to be cumulative in a remarkable degree, and then as rapidly to lose its power and to become merely mechanical and meaningless. The instinct of a properly organized composer tells him how long reiteration will exercise its power, and when to stop before the mechanical phase sets in. It also suggests to him that the simple expedient of variation in pitch or detail will extend the available range of vitality of the figure reiterated. It is well to recall that all the methods of art are ultimately reducible to a physical basis. And there can be no doubt that if the persistent excitation of an identical portion of our nervous organization is interrupted or modified the effect of the reiteration is diffused and prolonged. So when the formula is repeated at different levels of pitch the excitation is transferred from one group of nerve centres to another, and the identity of order is perceived rather mentally than physically. And moreover a new element of mental interest is super-added, because directly the formula is presented in changing conditions the mind begins to be interested in the order of those changes and to demand that they shall make some kind of quasi-geometrical patterns. Then the higher faculties of looking before and after come in, and the order of presentment of the changes begins to serve as the basis of fresh principles of design. Such orderliness is illustrated by a pathetic little slow movement in an early Clavier Toccata in D minor by John Sebastian Bach, in which the formula itself is of the very slenderest proportions, but the interest is unfailingly maintained by the



depth of artistic feeling manifested in the progressions of the harmony :—



With regard to the other point, that is the actual variation of the formula of thematic material, the heightened degree of interest is almost inexhaustible, for it invites the properly constituted mind to exercise the power of recognizing identity in diversity, and to follow the quasi-reasoning process by which a clear musical idea may be transformed, chameleon-like, without losing its individuality. This method of dealing with the one subject type has become so familiar that we have almost ceased to be conscious of its meaning. The procedure is illustrated in countless preludes of the early period. For it was evidently a recognized method in such little movements to

select a definite formula of arpeggio and repeat it almost ceaselessly, with slight alterations of form, in the presentation of an interesting and coherent succession of harmonies. The type probably originated in extemporization, but has persisted from the latter part of the seventeenth century till the present day. A large proportion of the preludes in the first half of Bach's *Wohltemperirte Klavier* are in this form, and it is highly probable that Chopin's intimate knowledge of that glorious collection induced him to apply the principle of reiteration with such highly modern feeling and in such new phases in his Preludes, which are amongst the most original and poetical of his works. It is conceivable also that Schumann's application of the same procedure in many short pianoforte pieces may have been suggested by the same types. And as the principle of procedure is manipulated by more and more composers who write under the influence of changing attitudes of mind towards art, the interest of presenting the root idea in greater variety of aspects attracts them more and more. In this we come into touch with the variations form, which (setting aside John Sebastian Bach) was until Beethoven's time so purely mechanical; but which through his far-reaching divination of artistic possibilities attained an interest and a status which in recent times has made it one of the most attractive and pliable forms to modern composers of feeling and temperament. For in the variation form not only do we get the reiteration of the theme in all manner of aspects, but the unity of each successive variation is attained by the use of definite formulas or figures which are employed in the same manner as in single

nucleus preludes. So in this respect the principle works simultaneously in two directions. The theme itself represents one long nucleus, and its separate variations are each individually based on characteristic articulations of their own. But however notable the single-thematic-nucleus type is in instrumental music it is even more conspicuous in the accompaniments to vocal music. Even the dullest of song writers have occasionally seen the advantage of adopting a definite and identifiable formula as the basis of consistency in the accompaniments to songs, but the greater song writers have divined the immense extent to which a clearly defined figure of accompaniment can add to the meaning and expression, while at the same time it binds the whole work into consistency. Schubert affords us a profusion of examples; the figure which suggests the spinning-wheel in "Gretchen am Spinnrade," the rippling water in "Wohin," the roar of the storm in "Erlkönig," the indefinable beauty of the consistent figure in "Geheimes," the ominous group of harsh chords in the "Doppelgänger." Most of these have an element of realistic suggestion in them, and can therefore be more easily associated with definite ideas. In later songs, such as those of Schumann and Brahms, the meaning of the figure or characteristic passage in the accompaniment is not so easily defined in words, because the subjective attitude of the composer causes him to be less conscious of externals, and more absorbed in the mood or emotions of the human creature, whose imagined experiences are the subject of the poem. But the fact of the employment of the single subject principle in songs up to the present day is even aggressively obvious.

With works without words the principle of basing entire movements on varied presentment of one type of diminutive subject, in a manner similar to the preludes and the accompaniments of songs, is both theoretically plausible and actually attractive in advanced standards of art. Certain elements of elasticity which are one of its advantages have been sufficiently pointed out. The idea of keeping to one text seems to many people more natural than preaching a sermon on two or three. And the strain on the average auditor is lessened when no sophistication is used in reiterating the same phrase. We must sometimes glance into the less distinguished spheres of art for confirmation of principles which are of universal application. And we find that in forms of art in which there is no pretence of a lofty æsthetic or artistic aim the principle of the single thematic nucleus prevails. In studies for all instruments it is the logical outcome of the object of the composer to facilitate the vanquishment of some special technical difficulty by reiterating a formula in various positions. Nearly all the most important Etudes in existence are therefore conspicuous examples of what we may call the single - thematic - nucleus principle. The principle also seems likely to afford a warning of the approach of possible disintegration in art. Disintegration is the return to the chaotic state by a loss of centralization. And the lessening of the hold of the centralizing power is sometimes manifested in later phases of art. As has been pointed out, the mind of primitive savages toyed with their little formulas of tune and merely repeated them over and over again just for the pleasure of hearing them, without any notion of order or design in the distribution of the items.

In the same way when highly strung and neurotic composers develop the hysteric state which, in some cases, is the modern equivalent of that exaltation of faculties which is commonly called inspiration—and when in this hypersensitive condition they contemplate some little trifling musical figure which happens to lodge in a cranny of a somewhat distorted mind—they proceed like infants of genius to toy with these little items, looking at them, as it were, from every point of view, turning them this way and that way, and stroking them and fondling them, just like the primitive savage but with all the superadded accumulation of sensibility which the passage of countless generations has piled up. The strong bands of self-control are loosened, the mind loses its sphere, and art becomes the toy of sensibility, of languorous swoonings mixed with spasms of hysterical violence, which manifest the unmistakable tokens of the waning efficacy of true principles of coherence.

Such art represents a strangely anomalous condition. The inventions of generations of composers are made use of for the excitement of sensibility, but the phases which appeal to man's higher faculties are almost in abeyance. And inasmuch as mere physical impressions, however subtle, must of necessity tend to exhaustion, such art tends to induce cravings rather than healthy satisfaction.

The higher qualities of organization which indicate an appeal to higher qualities of mind are absent. The lowlier organization betokens an appeal to a lower standard of mind. The lower type of mind welcomes concessions in its direction, and resents the higher type of organization which strains its powers too heavily. The form which has always aroused the

contempt and detestation of the lower type of mind most speedily is the fugue, which is the highest type of form based on a single thematic nucleus. It is capable of providing for the utmost concentration of organization of any form of music in existence, and has consequently been misused very freely by the composers and theorists who over-estimate the value of mere form. But it has served composers gifted with the highest qualities as a means to present their ideas with unsurpassable completeness and concentration. The form always suggests to the mind a discourse upon a definite text; and though progressive elaboration of its principles of organization ultimately brought out with clear definition an attendant subject which was called the counter-subject, and even sometimes other subordinate passages as episodes, the principal subject had almost invariably the higher distinction, and the more decisive intrinsic interest, and almost invariably took precedence of all other thematic material; and the parentheses so far from competing with it in prominence served rather to throw it into stronger relief. As the form was based upon contrapuntal methods inherited from choral music the subject was introduced at first in all the quasi voices successively according to laws induced by calibre of real voices of different grades; but after the beginning the composer was free to introduce his text in such manner as his artistic and constructive powers prompted; and the contrapuntal methods supplied means to make the subject pervade the whole texture of the movement from top to bottom; and if he was so minded he could enforce his text by causing its appearance to recur at closer and closer intervals till at length they

overlapped. To theorists this overlapping was a matter of the highest moment, as it was supposed to indicate great technical skill. But in reality some of the finest fugues in existence do not present any such overlapping; but attain their interest from the intrinsic qualities of the principal subject, and the manner in which it is intertwined with subordinate subjects enforced by variety and subtlety of presentment.

The emergence of subordinate subjects in fugues showed how men's minds were moving to positions which required even wider grasp of relations, and capacity to realize gradations of importance in different subjects. Though the fugue form had no connection with sonata forms in the outset, yet this power of mind to appreciate contrast and affinity soon came to play an important part in the sonata type of organization. But the evolution of this sonata type presents one of the strangest examples of the human mind working out certain principles when it thought it was engaged on something quite different! The principal and most interesting type of form in the group of sonata movements has commonly been described as being based on two different subjects; whereas as a matter of fact it is not based on contrasting subjects (for in some cases a single one does duty twice), but on the definite grouping of related but well-contrasted keys.

When men abandoned the old contrapuntal methods and began to explore the possibilities of harmony, they soon found out that it was wearisome to remain long in one key, or, in other words, to keep to the limited group of harmonies which were related

to one tonic or key centre. Their first discovery was that it was pleasant to move out of the key in which they began to a key which seemed to represent an opposite centre, and after having metaphorically visited a foreign country to come back comfortably home again. Then they found it enhanced the interest of the proceedings if they followed up their arrival at an emphatic definition of the contrasting key by excursions into other keys, which widened the horizon and ultimately made the safe return home more gratifying. And on this basis they patiently elaborated and systematized till they arrived at the typical form known as that of the first movement of a classical sonata—most unfortunately described by theorists, who thereby make the complete and interesting story of its evolution unintelligible, as “ternary” form.

All the stages of evolution can be verified by any one who has the time and the capacity to examine the Allemandes of the best suite composers and the first movements of early sonatas for the clavier. In the earlier examples there was little real definition of subjects, the intention was manifestly to organize continuous and consistent musical passages so as to embody the contrasts of key. It was not till the close in the contrasting key at the end of the first half of the movement developed into a passage of considerable length and importance that the idea of a definite second subject emerged clearly into ken. Then, it is true, the subjects took upon them more distinct and salient characteristics; but as a matter of fact the organization was not based on the subjects but on the distribution of keys in which they appeared. The subjects are in this case the



artistic expressions of the components of the structure. Architecture supplies analogies. The ideal of the art of architecture is to convert the mechanical necessities of structure into terms of beauty or interest—to use the things which are required for mechanical or practical purposes, such as the walls, the roof, the pillars, the buttresses, the arches, the windows, the doors, and every part and parcel of them to reflect a human intention over and above the mere structural requirements. But the artistic treatment of them, such as the cunning management of the shapes of doors and arches, or the ornamentation of them which makes them appeal to the imagination, is not the form but the artistic vesture with which the form is clothed. When a man speaks of a beautiful window or a beautiful arch he is speaking of the window or the arch in the æsthetic sense, not in its structural sense. For the most part people are unconscious of the beauty which comes of any dexterous application of structural necessities to artistic purposes. And in passing it may be observed that one of the spiritual points which is most commonly missed by the uncultured mind is the subtle relation between the necessities of the physical and the artistic presentation. The spiritual meaning is that the human mind, as it were, bends the limitations of physical laws to the purposes of beauty. It implies a spiritual conquest over matter. But the spiritual victory over matter, which reveals itself in a form for generations to contemplate, commonly escapes the contemporary mind.

The subject occupies an analogous position in relation to musical form in classical music. But the word came to mean to the average mind a sort of

musical entity, and theorists tried to make it mean something else, and contrived to induce a confusion of mind so serious that the progress of musical intelligence was at one time seriously compromised. The relics of these superstitions still appear in treatises on form which talk of the first and second subjects of movements in one of the sonata forms as if they were the basis of the organization, in spite of the fact that in some cases there are half a dozen different subjects in each of the contrasting keys, and that in others there is only one to do double duty. The classical type of movement was in this matter peculiar. It was like the products of the mind before applied thinking had come into general service. It was supposed that the whole scheme could be developed purely out of the inner consciousness, like the camel out of that of the German metaphysician. In such a condition of things the æsthetic entity was even less capable of serving as a factor in the scheme of organization than it became later. In the classical time of music the subjects were just as much the artistic interpretation of the terms of the structure as the fanciful treatment of doors and mullions and archheads in architecture. The classical stage was approximately materialistic; a sort of reactionary phase after a premature effort in a romantic direction, which found its highest expression in Schütz, Buxtehude, and J. S. Bach; the essence of the whole matter is form, and form was so worked up and elaborated in course of time that the type became too complicated and too great a strain for ordinary minds, and they took refuge in any little trivial futility that could be provided for them under the name of programme music! But in this scheme the most superficial composers really thought that •

they had to provide a tune in one key and a contrasting tune in another key, and then, after wasting some time in empty courtesies, repeat what they said at first over again in their original key. For the most part such works are very much like the buildings designed by jerry-builders' hacks. They point morals!

The true composers, even when hypnotized by the dogmas of theorists, had in the back of their minds the real facts of the case. When form is emphasized it is to the formal aspects that one must look to find the true meaning of things. The subjects in the formal order of things are at once the indicators of the salient points of the structure, and the artistic embodiment of those points. This is implied by the manner in which the subjects are spaced out so as to indicate the key strongly, and the manner in which they are marked off as complete by a close or a half close. It is implied by the deliberate procedure of modulation and the deliberate pause and "present arms" when the key of contrast is reached. It is implied by the form of the "second subject," and the consciousness of composers of the true basis of the scheme is shown very strongly again by the general adoption of a third subject at the end of the first half of the movement which is expressly founded on a succession of harmonies which emphasizes the cadential meaning of the proceedings at this point. The careful avoidance of the two principal keys in the earlier part of the second half of the movement also emphasizes the key principle, as it induced the instinctive desire to return to the principal key; and the enhanced space occupied by that key at the end (since all the thematic material of the first half appears in it) again shows

key to be the basis of the form, and the coda, when it comes into being, further emphasizes by various traits of art the cadence in the principal key.

But though the subjects are not in themselves the basis of form, they do not therefore lose their prestige. What the composer has to say has to be organized, and, as has often been said, what has to be organized is of much greater importance than the organization. In the classical sonata it was a mere coincidence of a very important transitional period that the scheme was organized in excess. The subjects themselves were excessively organized. They lost part of their intrinsic force in the process, because whenever conventional types of phraseology or procedure are employed there is inert matter. Composers had ultimately to find out how to convey to their audiences the impression that their subjects or thematic materials were complete and convincing without formal closes and courtesies, as has been shown in Chapter XII. Meanwhile the functions of thematic material in the classical period were to help the mind to perceive the decisive architectural principles which were embodied in the scheme, and to give that scheme as much genuine interest and vitality as could be supplied by attractive or interesting groups of phrases. And it was a further function to enforce the contrast of key by contrast of thematic material; and to make the whole organism consistent and coherent by keeping to the matter in hand; or, in other words, to confine the discourse to the matter of the discourse. It was essential that in this type of art the thematic material should be self-sufficient. For when human moods and passages suggestive of human feelings and the expression of them made their

appearance, mere beauty of form began to give way before development of more vital interest. The attention which had been projected to the enjoyment of complicated organization began to be cognizant of the ideas which were organized.

## XVI

### THE FUNCTIONS OF THEMATIC MATERIAL

#### II

It is generally considered to be evidence of a low order of mind to dwell too eagerly on personalities. The inner meaning of the love of personal gossip obviously is that the minds who regale themselves with such mental fare have no scope or range, and are incapable of feeling things in their wider and more interesting relations. Yet there are points of view where the more developed minds recognize their concurrence up to a certain point with such a mental attitude. They must indeed admit that the evidences of personal humanity in a work of art are of the very highest importance; for it is through them that the difference is felt between a work of art and examples of mere ingenuity. Great achievements of engineering or mechanics are admirable in their particular sphere, but they are not expressions of humanity and they are not art. Even the flaws in the art work of a great individuality are more valuable than mountainous piles of correctitude; for they remind men of the humanity which was engaged in the making. Art might from this point of view be summarized as the

expression of the personal particular in the terms of the impersonal universal. But having admitted so much the more active mind will probably part company with the more easily satisfied; as the thought of the impersonal universal reminds them that there are two points of view. While, on the one hand, men rejoice in the great individual works of art which reveal to them the great thoughts that come to great individual composers, they are reminded that, on the other, there is the strange and regular process of the evolution of the art in general. And that even the men of greatest and most original genius have to submit to the general laws which are manifested in that process. For when we come to consider art in wide spaces the individuals seem almost to be ruled out! The greatest composers are just as much the products of their conditions and environment as the least; and the great processes of art go on as if they hardly counted. They do, indeed, make better and more independent use of their opportunities than the men of smaller calibre, but at the same time it is obvious that John Sebastian Bach's works could not have been written in the time of Palestrina, and that they conform to the general trend of progress in his time; that Schubert's songs could not have been produced in the seventeenth century, but that they also fit in with the general movement of his time; and that a Wagner could not have appeared in the eighteenth century but did fitly do so in the nineteenth. They all submit to the conditions of their temporary limitations, add their share to the advancement of the methods and resources of art in the little spell that is allowed them, and pass the work on to others.

In the matter of thematic material composers of all calibres had to submit, like other people, to the inevitable; and they slowly and laboriously found out how to define one subject and how to employ it effectually. They then found out how to contrive subjects with inherent affinities or contrasts apt to one another and to organize a movement in which two subjects could be effectually dealt with. And it is strange and wonderful to see how, quite unconscious of their submission to inevitable laws, they built up their system of organization, step by step, solving the problems, as in other directions, in the order of their complexity; moving in the direction of the two-subject types while still thinking they were engaged on a single-subject type; and when they had established the two-subject type of the classical sonata moving in the direction of a many-subject type without being aware of it; and finally moving in the direction of the spiritual while thinking they were solely engaged with the mechanical problems. For we learn that in music as elsewhere the material or mechanical problems had to be solved first before the artistic scheme could serve for spiritual purposes. Composers had to be satisfied with developing the organization of musical material in itself, with no clear sense of intention beyond the presentment of satisfactory design. And it was not till the greater and more copious definition of the thematic material itself suggested more copious meaning (in manners which have been described) that they were impelled to identify that meaning as representing something outside music, and to develop art works as wholes in relation to some external conceptions. An analogous process is illustrated by the exaggerated



importance allotted in mediæval times and later to the mere machinery of thinking in the abstract, as contrasted with the stress laid on what one may call applied thinking in more advanced times. We see applied thinking first dimly suggested in the romantic phase of art, and we find it more decisively revealed in the so-called "programme" music of the times which followed.

But it is essential to understand the inwardness of this process. From this point of view the labours and inspirations of the composers of the classical sonata period were the necessary antecedents and preparations for the phase of art in which music is felt to have a spiritual significance over and above the mere abstract beauty of musical material. We are not concerned to discuss whether this or that ideal is justified by our speculative or theoretic conception of the mission of art, but what the story of art presents to us. It may fairly be argued that the purport and influence of music is greater if the composer can express his feelings and speculations on subjects of deep human interest by its means, than if he is restricted to the exposition of purely musical ideas. The power of Bach's *Matthäus Passion* lies, not in the mere presentment and technical manipulation of purely abstract musical material, but in the manner with which the music intensifies men's realization of the tragic story, beyond the power of the most eloquent words. The same must be said of the marvellous clairvoyance of Schubert's songs, of the instrumental movements of Beethoven's 9th Symphony as leading up to Schiller's Hymn to Joy, and most obviously of such later manifestations as Wagner's music dramas.

But here we must pause a moment to consider broadly in what way music deals most fitly with subjects external to itself; and in this connection we cannot turn our backs on changing views of the laws of thought. We used to be told that thinking was dependent on words, and that we could not think accurately or clearly without the use of words. But the farther we go the more we think in bundles, for which verbal processes are too cumbrous. We think in concepts, using the concepts as units; and reason by linking concept with concept; which concepts combine complications of constituents which are almost unanalysable. Life becomes more and more complicated, and we have, as in committees, to take certain details as read, and summarize on the basis of summaries. But in this direction music offers a counterpart. For though it is said with some justice that it is impossible to define decisively and comprehensively what music means, it must be admitted that the growth of artistic processes for making thematic material more and more significant has the effect of conveying to our minds something external to music which we are capable of sympathetically identifying, in feeling if not in words. We realize that the things which music conveys to us are just such wide and comprehensive conceptions as we feel to be the basis of much of our general thinking. Music comes more and more to be a presentment in compact forms of those big feelings and large ideas which can only be expressed by long verbal descriptions, if indeed they can be adequately put into words at all! The eloquence of music transcends the power of words in certain regions of our susceptibilities. It not only makes a more powerful appeal to them,

but it packs more into a limited space, and though it lacks the definiteness of words it affords analogies to the processes of verbal reasoning in ways which are essentially and exclusively the province of the art.

We may say indeed that where the ordinary mortal thinks in concepts the composer reasons in feelings. The prejudice against the branches of art which are associated with programme is to be deprecated, as liable to confound the genuine with the sham. We may admit that the choice of subjects for illustration has often been bad, and that they were faultily dealt with—but a fault of execution does not ultimately affect the value of a sound principle. The misconception of most early writers of programme music was that the scheme of the classical sonata type could be dispensed with and that a new heaven and a new earth of art could be developed on the basis of thinking out and, as it were, enumerating the successive aspects of the subjects which were to be discussed in a programme music form; whereas in order that a musical work of art shall be convincing *as music* it clearly must be built with full recognition of the developments of design and use of materials which prove to be inherent in an essentially musical scheme of art; and they had only been identified by many successive generations of composers preceding the period of the classical sonata; and that form of art was the completest exposition in the abstract of the principles of design and the treatment of ideas which were essentially and exclusively musical.

It was natural in the early days of programme music that people should go astray. For mixed with the impulse to find new paths was the instinct of rebellion against the apparent constraint of the sonata forms.

But the experience of a few generations has shown that music with a definite representative intention can accord with the general principles of structural and textural development of which the fugue and the sonata were the earliest mature types. And the later developments of representative music tend more and more to resume the broad general principles of the earlier types; thereby maintaining the essential guarantees of artistic sufficiency, while at the same time taking on a meaning which enhances the point of the thematic material. For composers learn to reason in feelings in ways which are consistent with fundamental principles which were illustrated in the sonata. So the ideal of the type of representative music is not such as ignores the work of the great composers of the classical period, but that which takes all their achievements into account and uses them as the basis for the extension of the domain of art. Programme music—or representative music—becomes the submissive descendant of the classical sonata instead of a rival and an enemy. The domain of the classical sonata was limited by the limitations of the human mind. Its progressive development as abstract art entailed ever-increasing complexity in the structure, passing by degrees into involutions so elaborate that the mind of ordinary man could hardly be expected to follow them. Apprehension of works of the advanced sonata type tended to become an abstruse exercise of the intellect, and the art form to be overbalanced on the intellectual side. But the introduction of ideas external to music, and even the unacknowledged presence of such ideas in the composer's mind, as in the case of some of Tschaïkowsky's works, serve to balance the strain on the intelligence

entailed by increased elaboration. Indeed it may be said to render intellectual effort superfluous, for complexity takes on a new significance. For whereas in the classical sonata design, form, and development were ends in themselves, in later music the genuine composer uses design, form, development, to give his points, in his dealing with external subjects, their strongest effect. It is not an intellectual effort which is required of the hearer, but merely a faculty of attention, mental efficiency, and receptivities sympathetically directed. Wagner said he did not write for the *Musiker*, but for the public. He meant that his object was not to astonish the expert by his technical feats, but to use his technique to enforce his ideas.

The effect which any feature makes in art is purely the result of relation to context. In the classical sonata period the faculties were exercised upon pure refinements of form in the abstract, in representative music the refinements of form are used, not to exercise the mind, but to hold it and persuade it to follow the utterances and emotional or modal sequence which the composer offers as representing his innermost musical thinking. The development of music has not, in such matters, differed from that of other arts. In early Italian pictures it is impossible not to see how deliberately the figures or conspicuous objects are placed with the view of getting a good and satisfying design. Their disposition does not minister to the expression of the inner meaning of the conception, but only aims at glorifying it by what we call a beautiful presentment of the subject. And we rejoice in the beauty of it. The modern painter wants to tear the heart out of his subject and to make others

see it and feel it in the same sense as he feels it. He does not want to glorify it as a thing of beauty at all—often very much the reverse. He often puts it in pickle to make his presentment more pungent. He uses his design and his methods to emphasize the points which he believes to be exclusively and essentially characteristic of the subject; and in this he is at one with the dramatist, and also with the composer.

But the painter and the composer have to convey their interpretation of ideas in totally different ways; the one in a sense objectively, and the other subjectively. Pictorial art represents ideas by the presentment of the external—the external sophisticated—generalized. Musical art in its advanced phases represents ideas in terms of the feelings which are generated by the ideas, and of those kinds of feeling which cannot adequately be put into words. We are all familiar with the types of feeling in which music speaks to us truly: such obvious and general types of feeling as gladness, merriment, eagerness, exultation, love, devotion, joy, aspiration, triumph, anxiety, depression, bereavement, mourning, wrath, hatred, despair, and every shade and modification and admixture of them. A little thought will convince us that such feelings are the province of music, and it is in dealing with representative music purely in respect of such feelings and moods that what is confusedly called programme music is justified. And we may add that a great deal of modern music, even when unavowed as representative music, is still often based upon the musical presentment of human feelings. As an exquisite example the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in A major, Opus 101, might be taken:—



where the urgency of pleading in the first subject gives the cue to the suggestion of a succession of emotional states which are intimately connected with longing. In such cases the great composer's works are in a sense autobiographical. They deal with his deepest innermost feelings. He transfers his sublimated egotism from the presentment of what he felt to be merely artistically beautiful to the expression of his own innermost emotional experiences.

It is in this phase that the functions of the subject in later music became apparent. The subject becomes the equivalent of the human word, but of the human word vastly expanded; and the true composer of representative music discourses to us in terms of thematic material, of the working of human feelings which are associated with the idea or subject represented. The subjects are the concentrated musical embodiment of the feelings which are aroused by the contemplation of something external to music; and the phases which such feelings may pass through in connection with the idea that has been taken in hand are illustrated and discussed by the manner in which those subjects are presented in relation to one another. The subtlety with which music represents feeling gives the composer a divination of shades of it which cover a different and a wider field than either words or painting ever can. So, as has been said before, the

ordinary mortal thinks in concepts, the composer reasons in feelings.

It will be as well finally to sum up the salient facts of the evolutionary process. The development of the single-subject type of art has been considered up to its modern employment in songs and short pianoforte pieces; and we have adverted to the fact that the finest type of the single-thematic-unit form was the fugue. At the outset the principle of a single salient subject seems to approve itself to our reason. It suggests a discourse on a single text, which seems much more intelligible than a discourse upon several. But composers soon found out in spite of themselves that music is not like a discourse; and that though the principle of a single subject or a single musical figure is very apt, and serves even for far advanced phases of art, it proves equally reasonable, from the musical point of view, to have several, representing either a formal balance of contrasts or a group of allied or somewhat related feelings. The principle upon which the thematic material is employed in fugue is far removed from the practice of mere persistent repetition, of which we have already considered a number of types. In the fugue the reiterations are not persistent. The text or single prominent subject is presented by itself at the outset, and repeated in different parts of the scale to introduce all the so-called "voice-parts," and then, from that moment, the fancy of the composer is left more or less free to choose in what parts of the scale and at what distance apart he shall repeat the subject. The reiterations are alternated with periods which afford contrasts, and the strain on the attention is thereby relaxed. And the fact of the mind being



engaged for a time by passages which are not subject, has the effect of throwing the subject into relief when it does present itself. In the fugue type we begin to realize the service of subordinate and contrasting features, which serve as temporary distractions from overmuch insistence upon the one idea. But the mere idea of introducing subordinate and secondary features of thematic material enormously increases the range of variety of principles of organization. On the one hand, if the principle of comparative relaxation be admitted an interesting cumulative process can be devised by making the special feature, the so-called principal subject, recur at closer and closer intervals till the reiterations positively jostle one another—in the passages which theorists call *strettos*. But, on the other hand, the periods of relaxation have their claims. They cannot be simply negative, chaotic, indefinite. They, too, must have their formulation, definition, modelling and coherence; subordinate no doubt in vitality to the principal idea, but still suggesting definite functions in the general system of organization. In fugue as elsewhere the process of increasing definition grows as the form of art develops. Where in early days the subordinate portions were just pleasantly flowing parts, helping a general scheme without asserting themselves, when we come to such a standard as that of J. S. Bach we find that the inevitable has arrived, and the secondary features have also become definite. Our theoretic advisers tell us there are laws for the treatment of such subsidiary features. Bach, on the contrary, allows his mind to play about with them, presenting all sorts of strange, fanciful combinations of ideas, which reveal to us the frank, spontaneous play of his

individuality rather than a logical consistency such as is the outcome of a preconceived scheme.

But the matter which concerns us at this stage is the circumstance that such fanciful experiments induced the appearance upon the scene of more subjects and more salient features than one. As has been said before, it led composers on unconsciously to the use of additional subjects in a type of form which professed to be based on one. Then the same thing happened when composers had arrived at the conception of deliberately basing works of art on two strongly marked subjects. The theory of the sonata form was that it was based on two such subjects. The theory was inadequate because the sonata form is based on contrasts of key, as has been shown in the previous chapter. Composers thought they were mainly concerned with two subjects, and even before they had settled their system of organization they had to accept a third subject, and when Beethoven unconsciously arrived at the true interpretation of the principles of organization on which the form was built, he was pouring out subject after subject—sometimes as many as three, one after another—in the space theoretically appointed for only one, and making each subject embrace several different nuclei, each of which served purposes of the greatest interest and importance when the business of development came.

By such processes the resources of art were obviously very greatly enhanced. The greater the number of nuclei the richer the possibilities of organization; and the greater the interest capable of being aroused in congenial minds. The increase of the resources upon which the artistic organization was founded invited the use of the artistic receptivities pure

and simple. This stage of art shows the meaning of the progress of humanity in power of appreciation, and the development of the capacity of the human mind through culture. The whole matter of the development of the higher organization in self-dependent music is an unravelling of certain powers of the mind. The point of the appearance of what may be called second and third subjects upon the scene is not merely that additional features are introduced for the pleasure of the hearer, which would be called new tunes by the unintelligent, but that they enhance the range of possible relations. The possible relations in which two things of any kind may stand to one another are few; those in which three things may so stand are more numerous and more complex.

And so the ratio goes on increasing with every additional item. The composer's object is to present a complete work of art in which all the parts are subtly and deftly adjusted in perfect relation to one another; and to discuss and present them in various phases of relationship which minister to its completeness. And it is only the minds which are properly equipped that can gauge and appreciate the higher phases of art which are thus displayed. The composer offers to those whose minds are adequately alive to these higher phases of absolute art the opportunity of enjoying the exercise of the higher faculties. The whole reason of existence of absolute music is founded upon this consideration. It assumes that the audience will be able to feel the delicate adjustment not of two factors only but of hundreds. It is in such a sense that one of art's many missions is revealed, because it invites the heart-whole, healthy

exercise of such faculties as imply the power to grasp a number of things at the same time, and to put them all in their right places. It can hardly be necessary to point out again that the advantage of highly developed mental powers lies in their capacity not only to feel things in themselves alone but to feel them accurately and clearly in their relation to other things, past, present, and to come; to feel them in their implications, their influences, their inevitable consequences, and their suggestions. The lowly mind feels the individual things acutely, physically, engrossingly; the highly developed mind feels the remotest relations of the things and thereby vastly enhances the interest of life, and the powers of judgment. Accuracy of judgment is based upon the power to assimilate many different factors and to gauge their relative importance and weight. So in art, the earlier phase implies the development of the power to appreciate abstract interdependence of artistic factors; and the later phases imply the development of the power of following similar processes in relation to the spiritual manifestations of art.

Beethoven and other composers of his type used their subjects mainly as in some way representing their inner selves and expounding their own feelings. The later composers of avowedly representative music deal in feelings too, but in the feelings of their characters. Wagner's attitude is so far essentially right that his subjects or "representative themes" attempt to present the inner man, or the feeling the situation represents, and not a superficial suggestion of externals such as we find in Liszt and Berlioz and the earlier programme composers. The basis of justification in representative music is that

the representation shall be in terms of feeling, not in attempts at objective suggestion ; and that the developments shall be analysable on the basis of personal thought, as we find it in Beethoven.

But the art proceeds from the particular to the more universal. First the expression of the personal feelings of a Bach or a Beethoven, then an exposition in terms of feeling of an Isolde, or a Siegfried, or a Hans Sachs or even a Don Quixote.

The functions of thematic material in the latest phases of art are to embody the feelings which are conjured up by the imagination of composers as representing the inner personalities of the characters they seek to express in musical terms, or the feelings which would be engendered in the minds of congenial listeners in connection with the situations or conceptions the composer seeks to impress upon them. And the distribution of such thematic material so as to make schemes of design or organization, however original, follows at least the principles which the great masters of the past have shown to be essential to music as distinguished from other branches of art and literature.

## XVII

### THEORY AND ACADEMICISM

THE standpoint of style seems a very convenient one for getting a good view of sundry subordinate matters connected with music, and of phases of art about which views are held which are sometimes vague and sometimes very decisive and strongly at variance.

One of these is the awkward question of theory, which seems almost to require an apology for mentioning. But however great the instinctive distaste for it which generally exists, it must be admitted that it looms very large, and has played a great part in the history of our race!

It may indeed be admitted that it is one of the hopeful signs of the times, in every department of intellectual energy, that practice and the experience founded on practice are more and more looked to both as the basis of method and the guide of action. But unfortunately in connection with music theory still engages the attention of a vast number of serious-minded people; and its influence is so great that, irksome or not, its consideration cannot altogether be avoided.

A theory may be presumed to be intended to be a comprehensive and coherent explanation of why things are what they are. Our pre-eminently useful

instinct of inquisitiveness makes the endeavour to discover why things are what they are extremely attractive, and impels us from our childhood onwards to make theories about everything; whether it be an interesting burglary which occupies the public mind, or how a chicken gets into an egg, or why a chimney smokes, or any other commonplace ordinary occurrence. And the interest is capable of applying itself to an art as much as to anything else. But unfortunately most of the pleasure goes out of theorizing directly people are brought face to face with an authoritative statement and have to learn some one else's theory instead of finding one out for themselves. We may admit that no one could develop a complete theory of any art by himself. The art of music indeed is quite one of the most complicated subjects which can be dealt with, and an adequate theory would require knowledge of psychology, biology, physiology, histology, acoustics, mathematics, physics, dynamics, phonetics, and sociology, besides a vast array of much subtler subjects which have as yet no recognized names. Indeed, to get a satisfactory theory of art men would need to have some extra lives, to include one for the practice of thinking hard and severely and another for the actual accumulation of the facts of music. But the curious thing about the theory of music is that tyros who are just beginning the study of their art, and have next to no education outside it, are expected to begin their knowledge of it by studying what is called theory.

. In reality a genuine all-comprehending theory is beyond the possibility of a beginner's grasp, so the word comes to be used to describe any specious and moderately coherent statement of what may be called

rules for cobbling adapted as far as possible to the mental capacities of babes and sucklings. In many cases such treatises are little better than means to enable the average indifferent teacher to stupefy his pupils. And one may justifiably feel great sympathy with the rebellion of beings who have any natural liveliness of apprehension against any particular kind of theory which is supplied them, when it consists mainly of dogmatic assertions that such a chord is resolved in such a way, and such another in another way, which the aspiring musical nature soon finds out not to be true. The principles are not stated, nor are the reasons for their existence, but merely the concrete dogmas, which have to be learned by rote. It would be all very well if to illustrate principles examples of the practice of the great masters were given; but as a rule they are not. The theory of music represents the old-fashioned notion of education in which everything was to be memorized and put in a concrete form without any attempt to awaken the intelligence; and the result is stupefying.

Apart from this, one of the drawbacks of ordinary theory, which suggests itself to every mind that is independently alive, is that it endeavours to give a fixed and permanent interpretation to something which is always changing. Nothing in the universe stands still, art as little as anything. But the manner in which musical theory is commonly propounded is as though the theorist tried to seize upon some point in the progress and to say "thus far shalt thou go and no farther"; and then it always dawns upon the next theorist's mind that he has got to take in something which has come about in art which was not anticipated by his predecessor and



enlarge a little by new doctrinal statements. The theorist must indeed always be behind the standard of art of his time, because he has to explain away something which is at variance with his scheme of things, but which has been already proved to be good by composers in practice; and while he is explaining what has been done, the new composers have gone ahead again, and their procedure will have to be explained by the next generation of theorists, who in their turn will again be too late.

So far style does not have much to do with it. But the question of style underlies one of the most serious difficulties and drawbacks of musical theory. For theory tries to deal with all the questions as if the groundwork of music could be abstracted altogether from the question of style. We have seen even in the little way we have gone that music cannot exist as music except in relation to the means which are employed to perform it; and that it makes all the difference to the texture of the music whether it is performed by voices or by keyed instruments or by orchestral instruments. And the means which are employed in conveying the music of any kind to the hearer not only affect the texture but even the very material of music. Even positions of chords sound quite different when they are given by voices and by instruments. The best disposition of notes with voices is not the best disposition with instruments. Chords and figures which are effective for voices are ineffective for instruments, and so forth. The ancient tradition of theory is that it is founded on what is good for choral music, and an excellent principle it is to ground young composers on the procedure which is apt for voices. But unfortunately, theorists, having

to recognize the growing elaboration of harmony in connection with progressive instrumental music, wherein countless things can be done which cannot be done by voices, have made such compromises that in trying to reach out towards the progress of instrumental music they lost hold of the simplicity of choral music without attaining to the freedom of conditions of instrumental music; and the result is a kind of half-way house, a condition neither of roast beef nor red herring, a state which is purely conventional and scholastic, in reality totally unscientific and not truly in touch with any music at all.

If the theorist propounded a simple principle and then showed how it was illustrated by different procedure in choral music and instrumental music he would be awakening the intelligence, but a compromise or a mere assertion of dogmatic rules which are not true of art as it is practised is merely bewildering to the learner. The elementary groundwork must, it is true, be stated in simple abstract terms; but directly that is got away from, and actual practice comes to be considered, the question of style must come in, because it is impossible to think of music except as performed in some way or another; and the regulations of procedure must be modified by the means to be adopted in performance. It is true that these facts seem to be beginning to dawn upon men's minds, and it must also be admitted that reforms can only be accomplished slowly; but meanwhile the fact that the requirements of style and the actual facts of practice have been overlooked needs to be affirmed; more particularly as it leads us to the first and last stage of academicism, that kind of base academicism which takes mere harmony exercises as

apt enough for either voices or instruments; while in fact harmony exercises are apt neither for the one nor the other. Unfortunately most people cannot get beyond the mere understanding of grammar, and finding that it exercises all the musical powers they have at their disposal they imagine that if they can write something in accordance with the rules of grammar supplied in the conventional form in theory books they are qualified to be composers. There are people who even get to think in harmony exercises; and actually imagine their taste to be refined and pure because they like them better than music, whereas in fact they have not touched the border of actual music at all. They cannot touch it till they realize the necessity of casting their musical thoughts in the terms which are best fitted for the means of performance to be employed. And it is mainly owing to the practical facts of art being thus ignored by theory books that people blunder into the worst form of academicism, which causes them to produce mere grammatical exercises, and call them music.

The absence of style is easily recognized by any one who has not been blinded by misconceiving theory, but it is not so easy to define the basis of what may be called the higher walks of academicism. The principle of accepting what purports to be authoritative, and acting upon it instead of realizing in one's inner being the truth of what the principles imply, is at the root of all academicism. The higher phases of academicism are those in which the maker of music uses forms of procedure because he has heard them recommended, and not because he has realized them as part of his own artistic experience. The composer who, knowing a

great deal and having studied all forms of procedure, uses stereotyped forms and artistic devices without realizing their effect in his own individual consciousness—who imitates what he is told is beautiful without having realized for himself that it is beautiful—who uses progressions and modulations because he is told they are good and not because he feels they are good—who uses types of form and design because he constantly hears them spoken of with approval and not because he has found them to be effective in his own personal experience—who does not really hear what he does in the artistic sense and has no real perception of what is called beauty, but merely does certain well-defined things because he believes they are the right things to do—attains to the achievement of respectable treatises, but does not exceed the bounds of academicism.

This condition of things doubtless explains the familiar fact that so many composers do best who have had to work out their own salvation without the help of learned pundits and instructors of the young. There is a vast quantity of useful information which any experienced practical man can tell to young aspirants in music or in any other exercise of human faculties, which will shorten his labours very materially; but the comparative rarity with which profuse and elaborate machinery for supplying education produces brilliant and shining masters of their craft, and the startlingly brilliant results which are sometimes obtained by men who seem to have had no help from their fellow-men, suggest that the additional toil which is cast upon the lonely genius is compensated for by the absence of the stupefying influence of academic

training of a conventional type which ignores the idiosyncrasies of the individual as well as the true relation between theory and practice.

The tendency of academies to breed academicism is well known, and it requires no great perspicacity to see that the causes of it are, on the one hand, the necessity of assimilating the principles upon which instruction is given in order to make it systematic, and, on the other hand, the difficulty of identifying and making the most of those individualities and idiosyncrasies and aptitudes which are the necessary foundations of every kind of pre-eminence. These facts are not by any means confined to music. The difficulties are felt in every quarter where education is conducted on any scale. It cannot be administered to groups of human beings without being systematized. But a thing which is systematized is stiffened into formality—often premature formality—and it generally happens that if a system becomes inadequate in the onrush of human motion (one need not pin oneself to its being progress) it may be impossible to reconstruct and adapt the system adopted without causing a complete breakdown of the whole educational organization. One reason would be sufficient to show the practical bearing of this—that all the experienced teachers would be sure to be saturated with the only partially adequate system which had been in vogue, and that a radical and sweeping change would reduce them to impotence long before there was any one ready to teach on the remodelled system, and therefore for a time education must come to a standstill, and the enterprising educational establishment where the new system is adopted would have to put up the shutters.

But it all points to the same uncomfortable fact that theory—in whatever department of human affairs it is met with—must rightly and always be regarded with distrust and suspicion. The fruits of human experience must be systematized in order to be communicated, but theory which precedes practice is always liable to stultify practice because it is founded upon too limited a range of experience to apply to the particular kind of practice for which it may be required. And as we have seen, a theory once formed cannot be adapted to new contingencies quickly enough to prevent breakdown while it is being reconstructed. The only safe theories will be the ones which may be proposed when the world comes to an end and practice will be no longer necessary. However, theory cannot be dispensed with, and those who have not strength and independence enough to realize the absolute pre-eminence of individual personal responsibility will go on clinging to fetishes and formulas and dogmas of all kinds to relieve themselves of the effort of thinking independently. Such being the circumstances, and theory being so firmly rooted, the utmost one can do is to point out its invariable untrustworthiness, and to note the piles of obstructive and useless lumber to which it gives rise and the misdirection and waste of human energy of which it is the too fruitful cause, of which academicism in all kinds is one of the most piteous manifestations.

But educational institutions do not necessarily produce academicism ; nor is all academicism the fruit of academic training. There is a spurious academicism which is the result of lack of training and knowledge of standards. This is the fruit of the superficial

impulse towards correctitude, and is like the purely artificial respectability of certain classes which is kept for special occasions, and is familiarly represented by rooms which on ordinary days are only inhabited by d'oyleys and antimacassars, ormolu clocks, sham flowers and sham china, and gilded chairs which are not warranted to carry more than ten stone. This kind of academicism, though much in favour in special strata of society, requires no more than a regretful glance. It is all so piteous, because, on the whole, though it is only describable as the paltriest veneer, it is so well meant; and it is rather a misunderstanding than a lack of appreciation and respect for refinement and the higher developments of the human mind. Academicism is, after all, in one sense, the tribute of the man who does not understand to the man who does, the acknowledgment of the actuality of a high ideal, even though it may not be intelligible to the man who makes the acknowledgment; and in days when purely theoretic enlightenment teaches the distrust of everything which cannot be reduced to a formula, and tabulated and put into a pigeon-hole, even academicism may have its useful function.

There is a phase of music which is just as little worthy of being called music as academic music, which ultimately takes its rise in misconceptions as to the meaning of art, and ministers to the glorification of abstract theory, and to total obliviousness of the requirements of style. The respect which is paid to certain music on the ground that it is scientific or learned is due to the fact that the number of people who can appreciate the really highest achievements of art is very small; that is to say, the

number of people who can really get to the heart of it as art, not as clever manipulation. People who have not the capacity to come into touch with the thoughts themselves, but have an estimable disposition to respect things which instinct tells them are great and true even when they do not understand them, are led, quite amiably, to expatiate on the purely mechanical aspects which are always of a high order in connection with great works of art, and to praise the works for being wonderful examples of musical science. A composer may find that what he has to say requires and invites a vast amount of elaboration, which involves the employment of a great range and variety of artistic methods and devices. He may have to write a work for special conditions of performance to which a class of really musical effects are appropriate which may make great demands upon his knowledge of artistic devices. These for a time may bewilder the auditor by the very complexity of the experience; and if he is unfriendly he will abuse what he did not understand as being dry, and if he is friendly he will praise on the ground that the composer is scientific. But as a matter of fact if the work were only scientific it would not be music; and it is very unfortunate that the advocates of musical culture should so often lay so much stress upon what is called scientific music. True it is that great mastery of technique and procedure is indispensable for the adequate exposition of great thoughts, and great artistic achievements require a delicate adjustment to the requirements of style so subtle and so highly organized that only one single human being in millions is capable of attaining to it. But it is not attained by science nor by



scientific methods, but by the development of a favourable artistic instinct. All the scientific methods which ever were devised could not develop such a subtlety of sense for style as is shown, for example, in Beethoven's Quartet in C $\sharp$  minor, and the 2nd movement of the Quartet in B $\flat$ , Opus 130. The composer who has been rightly developed by the means appropriate to an art may produce works on which the scientist may well expend his powers. But the synthesis which must follow analysis in order to produce a work of art is not the scientist's business and never can be; and scientific music is simply a misnomer. No such thing is possible. Art and science are different in their inception, their practice, their objects, and their procedure. When science is so amply mastered as to pass into philosophy, the philosopher may take the hand of the artist; but there is no bridge before the most advanced stage of the journey is reached.

Moreover, the civilizing effects of art are not attained by the contemplation of its ingenuity. That is essentially the secondary side of the matter, which appeals to undeveloped and second-rate minds. It cannot be too urgently emphasized that art is fine and glorious for what it says, and only in a secondary degree for the manner in which it says it. If it is to have a civilizing influence, if it is to console, to elevate and to enlarge men's lives, it will not be by its mechanical qualities, be they ever so wonderful, but by the qualities which appeal to men's souls. The attitude which looks for science in art may be an improvement on the attitude which sees nothing in art at all; but it must give place to a higher perception before art can really convey its message, before the right channels to man's soul are

opened and the great mind of the great artist or composer can hold communings with him.

It is perhaps a little unfortunate that one of the favourite devices for bringing people into touch with music should be so apt to favour the mechanical conception, which has its most pretentious phase in so-called scientific music. The idea of providing audiences at concerts with what are called analyses has no doubt been extremely useful. It helps even the most highly organized musical disposition to follow a new work. Under existing conditions, which make it likely that new works which require several hearings to be appreciated fully are the least likely to be heard more than once, it is good to have something to refer to ; while, no doubt, it raises interest in the nature of artistic procedure at a happy moment when the reader can test what is pointed out by immediate practical experience. At least it indicates a few of the rungs of the ladder by which approach may be made to higher things, but about the higher things themselves analysis remains for the most part silent. It can point out the beauty of a tune or a particular device, the dexterous devices of orchestration, the devices of design which throw some point or thought into a specially interesting light, the general principles and scheme of design and the subtleties of diction and style, but it is bound to leave out of consideration the deeper side of music and that which music alone can express. And when it tries to express such things it generally puts the reader into opposition and arouses his hostility ; for in the department of perception people who think they understand resent the implication of lack of understanding which underlies being told what they ought to understand. But

therein lies the characteristic risk of analysis that it talks of all the things which it can talk about so glibly—as if that were all; and it does not happen to mention that it can only deal with a subordinate side of music. Of course, really musical people are not misled: their enjoyment is often enhanced; but people who are trying to become receptive and to understand are often put in the wrong direction, and being apt to turn their faces from what they ought to be looking at, live in that condition of mere theoretic appreciation which leaves all their spiritual nature untouched, and the thoughts of the greatest minds unintelligible. But while recognizing its drawbacks it must be admitted that the methods of analysis have been a means of enlightenment and help to the understanding of music of a most comprehensive and wide-reaching description. The phenomenal increase of the spread of genuinely musical intelligence which has been attained in the past twenty years must be to a great extent owing to it, as it has supplied a sort of starting-point and standing-ground from which human minds have constantly moved onwards to the attainment of fresh recognition of subject-matter, and enhanced the readiness of their musical intelligence. This does not necessarily imply the increase of refinement or capacity to distinguish the fine from the base, but it does make the musical senses quicker in apprehension; and this causes musical receptivity to move in a direction which favours the unmistakable trend of modern art.

## XVIII

### ANTITHESES

#### GATHERING SOME SCATTERED SKEINS

ONE of the strangest things in human experience is the way in which adverse opinions go on flourishing in spite of the ferocity of their adherents. To judge by the manner in which men pour ridicule and contempt upon other people's convictions when they do not coincide with their own, one would think that the human race would have gone prematurely to wreck many generations ago if views so confidently denounced had not been extinguished by fire and sword. Yet the conflicting opinions go on surviving next door to one another, and no one seems one penny the worse. The truth is, vehemence of mutual recrimination is never very convincing. People give the rein to their pugnacity just for the pleasure of feeling excited. The ardour of battle accounts for much more heroism than generous enthusiasm for great causes. It seems very likely that the majority of those who lost their lives in the greatest contests in history had no idea what they were fighting for. And the same seems to be the case with those who wage wordy warfare on questions of art. They are so eager to come to blows that

they do not make up their minds clearly as to what they are disputing about; and when they have expended a vast amount of energy in mauling one another the adverse opinions remain much where they were.

The reason is, no doubt, that differences of opinion so often arise through people having only partial views of their subjects. One party sees one part and the other party quite a different part, and when they are fighting, it is all about different things. There have been great varieties of such fruitless conflicts about things musical, which were all considered to be settled and done with long ago, but whose subjects are still happily with us; and one of the most comprehensive of them all is the inextinguishable dispute between those who claim that music is all sufficient for itself, and those who claim that it is fraught with more enjoyments when it represents something else. The dispute has gone on under many names. At one time the question was between absolute music and programme music, which evidently took in two very limited portions of the field of action, and may be said to be almost abandoned as an exhaustive presentment of the antagonistic principles. A wider expression of the same antagonism may deserve more careful consideration, as it leads to some curious conclusions. The furious recriminations which graced such contests as those between the followers and the opponents of Monteverde, and between the Piccinnists and the Gluckists, and between the Wagnerites and the Anti-Wagnerites, and other similar disputants, all turned ultimately upon conceptions which, in connection with music, have come to be covered by the words

classical and romantic. We do not any of us know exactly what either of the words means. But they suggest sundry associations to unsophisticated minds. The primitive and uncultured idea is that classical music requires to be explained a great deal before ordinary people can be induced to like it, and that even then they, for the most part, like it rather less than before; whereas romantic music has a different way of getting at a man, and does not have to be explained in technical terms, and therefore does not give rise to the instinct of opposition. Law and order are on the side of classicism, and the impulses of human nature are on the side of romanticism. The champions of both parties have been unfortunate, the classicists in laying too much stress on one single type of design—the type of the classical sonata—and the romanticists by getting themselves involved with the apostles of programme music, who discredited the case by the futility of the works which were lauded as its finest representative examples, and by the fact that the eagerness to define the programme clearly caused composers to lose hold of the essentials of real musical expression.

The real source of the differences of opinion (of which such disputes give but a very scanty idea) is the fact that there are two distinct types of human beings who enjoy music. There are, on the one hand, those who delight in music for itself alone, who are filled with joy by its melodies and its rhythms and its harmonies, and, on the other hand, there are those who are not so spontaneously musical in their appreciation but who enjoy music because it expresses strange depths of feeling, awakes mysterious associations, and makes them feel emotional situations with an intensity

which is never approached in any other way whatever. For the one type the art is a refined pleasure, for the other a spiritual exaltation. We can see the types writ large in the differences displayed between the various average attitudes of races towards music. The Italians being pre-eminently a musical race, delight in it for itself. They of all people seem to have the genuine, spontaneous, unsophisticated joy in its beauty of form and phrase and melody ; whereas the northern races not being so musical, and being driven by force of climatic conditions to more strenuous thought, have always striven to make music wider and more satisfying to minds asking the "why" and the "wherefore" of things, by making it an interpreter of things outside itself. But the resources of art as art are limited, and it is not surprising that the Italians stopped short in everything they began, while the northern races, accepting gladly the principles of form which the Italians had evolved, expanded them, with a wider sense of possibilities, to all their highest manifestations. For though classical music was essentially the sphere of the Italians, even in that they had to give place to the Germans before they had approached the culmination of their own principles. They were easily pleased, and so they were easily passed in the race by those who required something of a higher order to satisfy their sense of responsibility. Indeed, it is interesting to observe that the one German composer who surpassed them absolutely in their own field was the southern German Mozart, who was almost as little afflicted with sense of responsibility as themselves. He had indeed all their delight in music for itself, and was almost the only composer of his race

who held by the purely classical ideals. He appears, in a figurative sense, as the channel through which classical music of the Italian type was conveyed into Germany. It came to him in classic lucidity, but directly it had passed through him, and began to spread out on the northern side, romance seized hold upon it and it began to be transformed. The predisposition of the northern race is too universal to be gainsaid. Bach himself had sounded the romantic note long before, and after many years of bewilderment men are beginning to realize that the wonderful skill which he developed was not elaborated for the purpose of astonishing the erudite but of moving the most unsophisticated by the poetical imaginings which were constantly welling up in him at every turn. And even long before him the same tendency of art among the northern races had been nobly manifested by Heinrich Schütz, who stands out in the days before Bach as the first genuine whole-hearted Teuton, for the reason that he used his music to express the deep feelings which devotional ideas generated in him. In music without words he is quite pathetically helpless, but when words set going his devotional fervour he achieves music which gives him a place among the few most personally characteristic composers. Nothing could be more significant of the difference between the Italian classical attitude and the romantic, for Schütz indeed does not supply the kind of music which has any claim to be beautiful in itself. Its very crudity, and the ingenuous sincerity of its frequent clumsinesses, would make it unpalatable to the lovers of music for itself, while they endear it to people with any sense of the human implications of the art such as are included in the



word picturesque. With him the question turns upon the quality of the ideas. The reason why nearly all the composers who immediately succeeded him in Germany are so unimpressive is that they tried to bolster up their inadequacies of spiritual inspiration by adaptations of Italian mannerisms and phraseology, which appealed to the lower order of minds at the time, and therefore are of no moment at all to those who come after. They failed because they were not faithful to the ideals of their race and tried to dress up in Italian elegancies.

It is tempting to dwell upon the merits and also the inadequacies of the composers who immediately preceded J. S. Bach, and to point out the confirmations which seem to crowd up when one thinks of the names of Hammerschmidt and Pachelbel, of Froberger and Muffat, of Buxtehude and Kuhnau; they make up what is lacking in consistency by the unanimity with which the aspect of their work emphasizes the inevitable bias of the northern race. But our attention is claimed by more familiar names whose bearers indicated the inwardness of things in Germany in later times. People would perhaps think that there is not much of the romantic quality in Haydn. In this connection one must venture to remark that many thoughtless people, whose hearts are in the right direction, think that in order to be romantic you must live more or less in a fog, and that everything said must be obscure and enigmatical. There is nothing which the true romanticist should protest against more strenuously and more steadfastly, mainly because it is the besetting temptation of the idealistic minded to indulge in the futile condition of mere pointless ecstasy. Romanticism is even

more dependent for its health and its justification on definiteness of idea and presentation than classical art. The singularly clear and definite artistic scheme of Haydn by no means precludes his being considered a romanticist. His circumstances compelled him to accept the classical traditions for the greater part of his life; but the more personally characteristic quality of his work begets the suspicion that he is not a pure classicist at heart. The theory is quite acceptable that he was but few generations removed from the undiluted simplicities of the Croats; and the peasant quality which is so vividly and pertinaciously in evidence in everything he did takes his work out of the region of cultured classicism, about which there always is a slight suggestion of the atmosphere of courtliness and etiquette and gentility. Everything which brings individuality strongly into evidence is uncongenial in courtly surroundings. Individuality has to be carefully adjusted to the requirements of formality. The fact that romanticism emphasizes the personal cannot be too often recalled. Haydn's position in connection with courtly people was rendered possible by the quaint fact that just at his time it was fashionable to take a languid poetic interest in rusticity and peasant life. Some of the members of the highest society had just discovered that the lower orders were human beings, and it amused them to see how people who had not been so fortunate as themselves revealed the workings of familiar human traits in uncourtly terms. And this was a favourable chance for Haydn. It was merely the limitation of all kinds of artistic method in his time which prevented Haydn from breaking loose from the classical trammels. If one needs proof

of it, it is only necessary to glance at a couple of familiar pages entitled "Chaos" at the beginning of his *Creation*.

Artistic methods had expanded somewhat by Beethoven's time, and liberal ideas and romantic tendencies could reveal themselves more fully. As has been pointed out before, his intellectual insight revealed to him the value of the classical principles of organization as manifested in the scheme of the sonata, but his human nature soon began to infuse it with romantic qualities. Almost every step he took in expanding the scheme of the sonata was in the romantic direction. The novel modulations (which often had an expressive purpose), the enrichment of the freer parts, such as the working out portion of the first movement, the expansion of the coda, the adoption of rhapsodical forms in some of the slow movements, even the reversion to the fugal form, all tended away from the classical idea of mechanical form. And the impetus gathered speed and force in the works of those that succeeded him. The meaning of his work was so little understood that both parties claimed him as their exemplar. Those who wanted music to express something to them rightly pointed to the romantic traits in his work; those whose imaginative qualities were limited to music itself pointed to the astonishing perfection of form, which was in this case expanded to such a wealth of variety. Thus it was that in his works the classical type of sonata found its ripest perfection, and the romantic impulse, which finally superseded the sonata, found its first decisive expression. It is unlikely that he himself was conscious of the real meaning of his later treatment of the form and contents of what he still called sonatas. It was

partly the fruit of lonely brooding when entirely shut off by his deafness from the actual hearing of any music; and he would probably have repudiated any connection with the type of composer which occupied the field when men did definitely formulate their conscious revolt from the type of the classical sonata. For unfortunately the artistic productions of the professed professors of the new doctrines were not for the most part such as to convey conviction to well-nurtured minds. They were unfortunate in tying themselves to named programmes, which most frequently has the effect of circumscribing and belittling the sphere of expression; and their treatment of the programmes was too often shallow and obvious.

As usually happens with new departures in art, men had to make their first start from a much lower level than that attained by the old line of art; and the attitude of mind of the most prominent composers was to overdo the superficial and purely decorative elements to such an extent, that men whose instinct for what is fine and noble and worthy of the name of art felt that the inferiority of the products to the old masterpieces was little short of aggressive. With all his fine qualities the great prophet of the new paths in the early days was such a veritable prince of tinsel-bearers that he was not calculated to ingratiate the cause with lovers of honest and strong sense. Liszt's was the appeal of the virtuoso of genius to the mob which was most easily taken in by rhetoric of the flimsiest description. Yet though he made his cause unacceptable to serious-minded people, and the apostles of programme music assisted by their short-sightedness and the

thinness of their scheme of operations, the art that was representative of things outside itself was bound to win in the end. The forces of nature set that way, and men could no more stop them than they could stop sunrise. Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin in his preludes, even Mendelssohn with his Scotch Symphony and his Italian Symphony, and his Hebrides Overture and his *Midsummer Night's Dream* music, and finally the overwhelming and comprehensive argument of Wagner's music-dramas, settled the disputed question in favour of the romanticists.

A little consideration will show that the revived interest in J. S. Bach's music is the outcome of the admission of the romantic plea in art. All the greatest of Bach's achievements are not only unclassical but anti-classical. It is the personal conviction and the depth of poetic fervour in him which make such a powerful appeal to kindred souls, not the mere dexterity or the submission to any theoretic principles of mechanical form in themselves. In passing it may be observed that the fugue when rightly understood is the most romantic of forms. It is only northern or romantic races who can use it effectually, and Bach was of all men the most successful in using that form for romantic purposes. But apart from Bach's conspicuous association with fugue, he is most notable for the manner in which he devised his own methods of organization, and, like the latter-day rhapsodists, frequently devised them in relation to ideas external to music. In this light it is easy to see the reason of the long eclipse of his work. Men act and think in concert under the influence of suggestion. And it so happened that just after Bach's death the energies of the musical portion of the human race were entirely

engrossed in solving problems of artistic organization in the classical sonata and the operatic aria. Their whole energies were directed to the unravelling of abstract principles of design; and while they were so engaged they could not attend to Bach's message. Such things as the great Fantasia in G minor for the organ, the *Chromatische Fantasie* for Clavier, the Passions and many of the Clavier preludes and toccatas, and such outpourings of spirit as the slow movement of the Italian concerto were out of their ken. But when they had passed through the phase of the classical sonata and had come out the other side with assurance that the doctrine of artistic organization was vindicated, they began to turn to him and to learn the fascination of his romantic personality. His music had the happily insidious effect of making them think they were listening to classical music, because they thought that as he lived so long ago he must be a classic. But there is a great difference between being a classic and being a composer of classical music; and Bach has had as much influence as any composer in weaning men from the exclusive domination of the classical orthodoxies.

A very subtle illustration of this true position is implied by the surprising manner in which he ignored the accepted respectabilities of part-writing. His voice parts are sometimes so wilfully and aggressively exceptional (to use a mild word) that they almost suggest a perverse spite against the formulators of the principles of respectability. Consecutive major sevenths, consecutive seconds, sophisticated resolutions, dropping leading notes, false relations, abnormal leaps, almost unthinkable intervals, and many almost unanalysable misdemeanours, form part of the outfit

of his astonishing personality. It cannot be gainsaid. It is part and parcel of the ensemble of the man. But to the smooth, polite, formal, and decorous age that came after him such procedures would appear little better than outrages. The courtly type of art did not lend itself to acute sensations in the shape of discords, nor to highly accentuated effects of any kind ; and when under the influence of the awakening sense of new departures men began to employ combinations of sounds which went beyond the natural range of the sonata type, there was an outcry of protest against introducing ugliness in art. What the honest protestors would call ugliness must be recognized very plentifully indeed in the works of J. S. Bach, and he amply vindicated his right to be just as ugly as he found necessary. The truth is that though excess of harshness seems to be superfluous in absolute music, in which design counts for so much, in music which has to deal with human things external to itself, there is nothing in art which can be barred on account of its ugliness so long as its existence is justified by the context. Things are not condemned on account of intrinsic qualities but on account of the positions in which they are found. The chord of the diminished seventh is one of the commonest features in modern music, and one of the mildest of discords. But were a modern organist to take it into his head to improve on Palestrina's Masses by putting that innocent and familiar chord into them, every one with the faintest suspicion of instinct for style would feel that the word ugly was not adequate. The insertion of some of the mildest ferocities of recent orchestral music into one of Mozart's Symphonies would cause even a hardened debauchee in sensations

to jump in his seat. But given the texture of Bach or the conditions of polyphonic modern music the test of ugliness is not its positive offensiveness, but whether it is evidently at variance with the general character of the work of art in which it occurs. The word "context" in such a case extends to the whole of the work of art, because in anything which genuinely fulfils the requirements of a work of art, every part of it, however insignificant, has some delicate relation to every other part. Such high qualities, however, are not discernible at once. The genuine quality of a work of art lies in its being able to stand constant scrutiny for a long space of time without betraying inadequacies or fatal conflicts of consistency in the relations of different parts of the work one to another. It is only by a work being heard again and again by different orders of minds that its high qualities are tested. And average human minds in the aggregate are much more capable of discerning such things in the end than is usually supposed. If the construction of a work of art is grossly out of gear, grotesquely lacking in proportion, confused in the presentation of its ideas, irrelevant in development and inconsistent in style, the attention given to it by many minds ultimately discovers its insufficiency, however much its subjects and melodies may for a time attract contemporary taste. It is upon the verdict of such a jury that the offensiveness of any particular reputed ugliness must ultimately rest.

The enlarged range of utterance which the latest conception of music makes possible undoubtedly enhances the opportunities for the expression of personality. Under the old conditions personality



had to be very strong and consistent to make itself felt. Under the new conditions the opportunities are diffused among many workers rather than restricted to the few of greatest calibre; and they also become more favourable for the shorter types of characteristic music, like the smaller types of characteristic literature, which have in recent years taken the place of great and imposing works of any kind. The fact that classical music made a merit of reserve was a hindrance to the expression of personality. A side light is afforded by the two-fold character of Beethoven, whose works were least characteristic of his personality when he was most nearly a classical composer; and represented his great personality more vividly and decisively as he infused his work with more meaning. In the phase which music has lately passed through, the impression is that the last thing which people regard as a merit is reserve. The impetuous eagerness to find something which will arrest attention begets a disposition to regard excess as an actual merit. The joy of escaping from restraints which seemed like hindrances to full self-revelation has caused composers to rush into the other extreme. The marvellous expansion of the taste for instrumental music and the greatly increased opportunities for hearing it have certain inevitable drawbacks. Ardent young musicians, blessed with plenty of natural aptitude, have such ample opportunities for hearing mere effects and for finding out how they are made that the variety of fashions in which men can sow their wild oats is bewilderingly increased. And the mere capacity for sowing them broadcast is regarded as a proof of genius. Wild extravagances are much more amusing

to the contemporary public than works which take a good deal of concentrated attention to appreciate. The young spendthrift, who dissipates a vast fortune in backing wrong horses, attracts much more attention than the producer of the finest work of genius. But that is only for a short while. The public that is spread over many years, sometimes over generations, supplies in the end quite as many who are deeply interested in a work of genius as those whom a momentary excitement, generated with the assistance of newspaper paragraphs, caused to be enthralled by some preternatural folly.

The general impression conveyed by such considerations of the aspects of the romantic phase of music does not seem very reassuring. Artistically minded people feel uneasy at the developments which do not seem to turn out as they would like them to do. But after all they have got their Bach and their Beethoven, and their Mozart, and their Haydn, and their Brahms, and withal their Handel and their Wagner, and their Schumann, and their Mendelssohn and a few more, so they are not so badly off if the more general diffusion of modern art does not appear favourable to the production of giants. The situation is only changed in so far as the vast extension of the technique of the art, and wider diffusion of the mere capacity to give utterance to inner promptings, afford men more opportunities to express themselves. The higher natures have the same opportunities still, but the range becomes wider. Men of baser quality offer themselves for public contemplation as freely as those who have the higher sense of responsibility. Commercial conditions and the practice of subtle arts to attract attention make it harder for the finer

natures to persist in unremunerative courses. But the devotion to high ideals is not quenched and never will be. The state of music faithfully represents the wider extension of individual independence in human beings in every class of society at large; and the romantic phase brings all phases of humanity into the field, from the lowest debasement of purely selfish and egotistical frivolity to the highest aspirations of the finest types of temperament. There is no need to lay too much stress on distressing phenomena. Art is the most faithful counterpart of social and general human conditions, and the appearance of unsavoury features is the inevitable fruit of more general diffusion of the power of expression. We cannot expect art to be devoid of such features unless human nature manages to purge out a large percentage of its baser qualities.

Meanwhile the more men hear of every kind the more they are likely ultimately to come to an understanding which will help them to discriminate between the lower and higher types. There is nothing that need be disheartening to steadfast minds in men "proving all things"; for all experience of the past shows that in the long run they generally hold fast to that which is good.

## XIX

### REALISTIC SUGGESTION

THERE is hardly any feature in music about which people are less unanimous than they are about realistic suggestion. At one time people arrived at the habit of mind which regarded any musical imitation of externals as a decisive proof of inferiority. Other people have been moved to enthusiasm by mere skill in imitation of sounds or the suggestion of motions of things which apart from music would not arouse in them the very smallest interest. Even the moderate and reasonable people, those of average culture, are divided between a shrug and a smile when bird-noises and bells and the sound of many waters become too frankly conspicuous. The inexperienced and unbiassed mind might well think it childish to represent a thing or a person going upwards by a rising scale, or a man running by lively passages of semiquavers. Yet both devices have been used by serious-minded composers of the very highest order in devotional works and at moments when anything in the nature of a joke, or even mere playfulness, would be most unseasonable. No doubt the most serious-minded composers might be individually capable of making mistakes ; but the matter would need to be considered more deliberately if there were a general consensus of

opinion among the greatest to resort to the devices which on abstract grounds seem of doubtful expediency. If the great minds have made mistakes, such mistakes are likely to be interesting, and if it is not the great minds who have made them the subject invites consideration in the hopes of attributing the mistakes to the right quarter. It is possible that people who have applied their minds seriously to musical questions in the past have thought the subject too insignificant for their mettle. But it is obviously desirable that some definite understanding of the merits of the case should be arrived at, because the art in these days is tending more and more into regions where realistic suggestion must be candidly admitted to be almost inevitable. It is even possible that in the future it may have a good deal of attention called to it, for it is a point where the combatants are likely to meet in the field of battle between the two most widely antagonistic parties; and the champions of culture are temperamentally inclined to be hostile to a device which so obviously appeals to the uncultured.

A certain class of highly cultured musicians have in the past been misled through the familiar drawback of having too restricted an outlook. Those who thought the sonata type the final and most perfect product of human endeavour in music naturally concluded that a thing which had no place in it was superfluous altogether. They possibly overlooked the reasons why it had no place in it. It must be obvious at once, when the situation is faced frankly, that realistic suggestion is impossible as long as art is what is called abstract. As long as art is self-contained and exists in itself and merely presents idealized types of procedure which are peculiar to

itself, and grow, as it were, out of its own nature, it has no external facts to draw upon or imitate, nothing to supply the basis of any kind of realistic suggestion. It is shut up in its own domain and unconscious of what is going on outside. In sonatas and symphonies which are genuine and complete representatives of self-sufficient music it would be absurd to look for realistic suggestion. As a matter of fact, the essential ideal of the pure classical sonata is that it shall make no reference to things outside music, and when it does it is not pure classical sonata. Beethoven's works of course supply instances to the contrary; but that is just one of the many things which show where Beethoven was ceasing to be a pure classicist, and was leading the way to the romantic phase of art.

So the whole of the period and phase in which sonatas were the pre-eminent type may be set aside in considering the position and the legitimacy of realistic suggestion; except to take note that when the devices manifest themselves it is clear proof that the aloofness of that form of art is breaking down and that human feeling of an identifiable type is beginning to romanticize it.

There is yet another phase of art in which on *a priori* grounds it would seem superfluous to look for realistic suggestion. The pure choral music of the Roman Church was inspired by a condition of mind which was almost as much dissociated from familiar externals as the classical sonata. It was the picture and counterpart of the devout mind, which being, as far as the act of worship was concerned, entirely engrossed with the other world, had no opportunity to be influenced by the externals of this. Yet for all that, as soon as their technique advanced far

enough, even in sacred music composers could not avoid the recognition of external associations. Even a man as spiritual as Palestrina makes the voices go upwards in a perfectly frank and open manner when the word "ascendit" occurs:—

## JAM CHRISTUS

as-cen-dit . . . in cœ . . . lum.

cœ-lum . . . et as-cen-dit . . . in cœ-lum

Et as-cen-dit . . . in . . . cœ-lum, se-det ad dex- etc.

## ASSUMPTA EST MARIA.

et as-cen-dit in cœ . . . lum, et se-det etc.

et as-cen-dit in cœ . . . lum . . . se-det ad

et as-cen-dit in cœ . lum

and there is an element of realism in the manner in which he sometimes interprets "passus et sepultus est" by a downward passage, and the use of such devices have not militated against the works in which they occur being recognized as amongst the half-dozen finest masses in the world. And his contemporary Lasso not only adopts the same procedure to suggest going up or down, but in the sacred work through which his name is most widely known, which is the Penitential Psalms, he appears to make reference to the traditional character of the mule, by even more abstruse realistic devices.

It would almost seem as if even the sacred composers took every excuse to avail themselves of this concession to the material concomitants of the spiritual. For after Palestrina's time it became almost a recognized habit to represent either "resurrexit" or "ascendit" by a rising scale or a rising mass of harmony, or some other analogous method; and the traditional attitude of mind is quite frankly endorsed by Beethoven in his great *Missa Solennis*, where the word "ascendit" induces ascending scale-passages which extend over the whole range of orchestral practicability.

But if great composers of choral music could not resist these symbolic references to externals, even where the responsibilities of a religious purpose must have had a restraining influence, in their secular choral music they had no hesitation in making use of realistic devices, in serious compositions as well as in humorous ones. Vocal pieces dealing with battles and birds and hunting seem to have attracted composers in their ultra-mundane moods even as early as the fifteenth century, and imitations of military instruments were introduced which were quite as childish as those in the programme music of the early part of the nineteenth century. Among the birds the cuckoo became very popular, and her little phrase pervades the lighter phases of music from the sixteenth century onwards. Cocks and hens were also much favoured, and one composer of that century devised a canzona in which a whole body of singers were set up to imitate the clucking of hens in rhythmic harmony.

But it is advisable to distinguish between the use of the device as a sort of joke and its use in more or less serious music as a part of a wider artistic purpose. In many of the above instances the object is



manifestly to raise a laugh. It is difficult without venturing on a voluminous treatise to attempt to define exactly where such pieces as Jannequin's "La Guerre" and "La Chasse" and the "Battle of Malignano" come in the scheme of art. They are obviously not written to arouse laughter, and yet every sane person feels that they belong to the same irresponsible category as the bird pieces or Jannequin's "Cris de Paris" or Orlando Gibbons's "Cries of London," and that examples of realistic suggestion which occur in them are of very little importance. That is, they will not help in the least to show its place and function in genuine art, except in the negative sense that all the commonplace imitations of the actual sounds of battle illustrate the characteristics of the purely trivial mind of all times; which takes no notice of the more moving and impressive aspects of war, the heroisms and horrors and exultations and despairs, but is merely amused by the superficial aspects which appeal most to the senses. It is only when people are giving less than half their minds to the subject that they will suffer such things to pass as adequate. And that is probably where the explanation of the feeling people have about these battle pieces is to be looked for. The absurdity of suggesting such a fearful subject as the wholesale slaughter of human beings, or even the pageantry of battle array by trumpery imitations of the little bits of phrases sounded by military instruments, is so grossly obvious that when the mind is awake it can only save itself from rage that anything so idiotic should be perpetrated by a shoulder-shrugging laugh. In the end this may prove to be a quarter from which a good deal of light will come.

For the present it is advisable to follow the course of things to see how oddly even great minds went astray in such connections.

Frescobaldi and Byrd were among the very greatest and most serious instrumental composers of the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century—Frescobaldi actually the greatest composer of organ music, and Byrd without a superior in virginal music. Both of them wrote battle pieces for the domestic keyed instruments and both afforded examples of the worst kind of realistic suggestion.

They both of them almost ignore the really impressive aspects of war—for indeed their art was not sufficiently advanced to cope with them—and they afford illustrations of an aspect of the subject which appears to have been generally and frankly approved in those days; as is expressed by Mersenne, who awards the palm to the violin among all instruments, not because of its intrinsic musical capacities but because it could imitate so many other instruments and the cries of the human voice as well.

The fallacy, in these latter days, is obvious; but it is necessary to dwell upon it a little, because it affords a clue to the ways in which the unintelligent are misled. The basis of style of either voice or instrument, as has been said before, is the type of musical motion which its physical characteristics make most congenial. To limit an instrument to doing just so many of those things which it can do like another instrument, in order to suggest that other instrument, is a stupid misconception of the elementary foundations of style; for it degrades the imitating instrument to a level even below the instrument imitated, because that instrument is quite

certain to have many capacities of its own over and above those of the instrument it imitates, which it forgoes, and it is also absolutely certain that the instrument imitated has some characteristics which the imitating instrument cannot produce; and it follows by an almost universal law that just those very characteristics which the imitating instrument cannot reproduce are those which give the instrument its special individuality. The imitation of a trumpet by a violin would no doubt delight the unawakened mind that was incapable of appreciating music of the highest order which the violin could play; but the process would imply the abrogation of the most spacious possibilities of musical expression and the artificial adoption of the limitations of the most limited of instruments in order to hoax the unintelligent into thinking of one instrument when they are hearing another; while at the same time the most characteristic effects of the instrument imitated, which the violin cannot produce, are manifestly left out. There are conditions under which it is essentially right and proper for violins or even voices to hint at the style of the trumpet. But that is when the suggestion comes incidentally without any limitation of the actual resources of the imitating instrument. The test is whether the listener is invited to listen to an imitation of a trumpet or to something which subtly suggests the trumpet in connection with a situation in which a trumpet would be significantly prominent. The passages in which Frescobaldi's *Capriccio* presents imitations of military instruments obviously fall into the former category and would strike any hearer nowadays as childish:—

## SOPRA LA BATTAGLIA.



and (*sic*)



In extenuation, however, it may be admitted that in his time the technique of all instruments was backward, and therefore the absurdity of making a bald quotation of a trumpet passage on a keyed instrument of any kind would not be so grossly obvious. The imitations of trumpet and “droomes” and bagpipes in Byrd’s “Battell” are also infantile; but their futility does not strike the mind so aggressively :—

## The Trumpets.



## The Irish March.



Some of the instruments he imitates are not so decisively isolated by their limitations and their

physical character. The essential value of the drums is rhythm, which a keyed instrument can reproduce, and in Byrd's piece they are represented by an effect which is thoroughly appropriate to a keyed instrument and is in itself very amusing; and there is an air of jollity and a swagger and an animation about the proceedings which suggest a great deal more than the mere instruments which profess to be imitated. Byrd's mind in this case ranged wider than Frescobaldi's, and thereby affords a basis of serviceable comparison. What deficiencies there are, are to a great extent owing to the backwardness of technique and artistic method in his time. When the particular type of technique of the polyphonic order which was most advanced in his time lent itself to the imitation of other sound-producing instruments, he was capable of entirely disarming criticism; as, for instance, in the delightful piece called "The Bells" in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, in which the tinkle of the little bells and the boom of the big ones are combined with a skill and a subtlety of æsthetic sense of the highest and most delightful order:—





For how much the development of method and artistic organization counts might be seen by comparing Frescobaldi's movement with the fugue at the end of Bach's Capriccio on the departure of his brother to the wars, where Bach quite frankly adopts a post-horn tune as his subject, but subordinates it, through the wealth of other artistic sources of interest, to its proper position on the general scheme.

Further examples of realistic suggestion which are very illuminative are found among the great variety of "echo" pieces. The taste for imitating echoes came into activity early; probably about the same time as the other types of realistic suggestion. About the end of the sixteenth century they were very much cultivated by composers, whether in choral music or the new lines of instrumental music. Orlando Lasso may be accepted as one of the four greatest composers of choral music at its very greatest period, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck as the northern peer of the great Frescobaldi. The former devoted some of his highest gifts to echo pieces for voices, the latter produced examples for the organ which are so futile that they suggest psychological problems of great interest. Lasso was very often extremely entertaining, even at inappropriate moments; he seems to be peculiarly tempted by some subtle, cunning piece of humour or wit, which would appeal to men of his intellectual standard, if not to the helpless crowd. In one of his echo pieces he employs two choirs of four voices

apiece to convey some quaint facts of human nature which are as true now as they were then. His object is obviously not to cajole undeveloped minds into the smile of pleasure which betokens that they have perceived something which to their ears suggests the effect of an echo, but to use something ideally equivalent to an echo to suggest phases of human disposition, and the many side-issues of echoes which really have some interest and humour in them. It would not be fair to ignore the actual musical effect and artistic skill, for there is something quaintly attractive in making echoes respond to full harmonies in four parts; especially when part of the joke is the strict employment of the very stiffest and most mechanical of art forms. But the thing which gives the movement its point is the humorous relation of the imagined human being to the echo, addressing it as if it was another human being just within calling distance, and getting back the compliments and the courtesies and the insults and the contumelious epithets in full measure and with the very same words and accents—"O La! O che bon eccho! O bon compagna che voi tu?" and so on, arriving at a pretended quarrel and calling one another "gran poltron," and ending amicably "Addio, bon eccho! Rest' in pace," the last word "Basta" dying away to nothing. It is so laughably true that one feels that Lasso must have played the merry light-hearted game himself, and with just the spirit and almost in the words that a lively minded person in face of an echo might do after three centuries of human change and development.

Sweelinck, too, is a man whose personality is quite specially interesting. He is nearly always inspired

by the impulses of progress, whether he is writing for voices or for the organ, and gives the impression of largeness and liberality of mind. In some ways his compositions for the organ represent absolutely the highest point attained in his time; but that highest point was attained in the spirit of the adventurer, by fine generous qualities of courage and endurance and also by good luck rather than by deliberately mapping out the ground and the making sure of each step forward. Sweelinck, like Frescobaldi, was a great organist; he could therefore check his own experiments by the light of his own judgment; but unluckily he could also gauge the extent of the capacity of an irresponsible public audience for being very cheaply imposed upon. It is quite absurdly obvious that the organ lends itself with more facility to echo effects than any other instrument in existence. It is merely a matter of mechanical arrangement. It therefore follows by one of the implied canons which are accepted by all honest folks who understand such things, that a man who has any artistic self-respect will not resort to such cheap and easy devices unless he justifies the procedure by an even exceptional employment of higher artistic skill in connection with it, which is as much as to say that he will observe the true rules of æsthetic proportion, and fill up the greater measure of interest in those things which are of concern to the artistically awakened, and relegate the effects which concern merely the very obtusest and most superficial minds to that part of the scheme which is of the least possible importance in the actual merits of the work of art. Sweelinck stood quite at the beginning of the story of modern instrumental music. His compositions appear in



association with those of Tallys, Byrd, Bull, Peter Philips and Morley in the English collections of virginal music. The development of this branch of art had not gone on long enough for men to have laid hold of any wide-reaching tests of æsthetic principles. What probably happened in such cases was, that when composers made experiments and found that a large number of their audiences were delighted, they, being a race sympathetic and most easily influenced by suggestion, accepted the pleasure manifested as endorsement of the experiments, where the exercise of their own experienced judgment would have soon shown them they were forgetting their responsibilities. Such seems to be the likeliest explanation of the fact that in immature states of art men who deserve the name of great often do such silly things that in later times it is difficult not to laugh just at the moment when the artist means to be most impressive. The more enterprising a composer was, the more he was liable to trespass on absurdity! And among such otherwise admirable composers, Sweelinck must be included in the light of his imitations of echoes for the organ:—



The point is that there is no musical interest in the

proceedings at all. He merely aims at an effect by the use of simple and uninteresting groups of chords, which do not imply any real artistic purpose. The difference in these cases is that Lasso takes the echo as a cue for suggesting a great deal more than the echo, in terms of real artistic interest; Sweelinck relies upon the imitation, which possibly pleased the most unintelligent of his audiences, but to those whose minds were awake carries no conviction at all.

Lasso represented the old type of choral art, and Sweelinck the branch of organ music which ultimately became a link between the old and the new art which dawned upon the world at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The advent of composers of musical dramas in which solo voices were accompanied by instruments might be expected to provide instructive examples of realistic suggestion. But as a matter of fact even the most enterprising of them, Claudio Monteverde, does not seem drawn in that direction. One reason of this was possibly that the technique of genuine instrumental expression was not developed to sufficiently independent conditions; but another was that he was so much engrossed in dramatic expression, that in using the voice to express it he unconsciously adopted the true musical attitude of trying to represent human feeling, and concerned himself little with the external concomitants of a situation. When he does come into the range of realistic suggestion, his keen dramatic insight leads him aright; for nothing could be more thoroughly just and convincing than the suggestion of irregular throbs with intervening moments of silence with which he represents the exhaustion of the wounded combatants in the "Combat between

Tancred and Clorinda" which he produced in 1626—a procedure which finds its counterpart in the closing bars of Beethoven's great march in the Eroica Symphony.

By the time Monteverde's pupil and almost only spiritual follower—Cavalli—had attained his artistic majority and pre-eminence, the art of instrumental accompaniment had progressed a good deal, and he seems to concern himself more with the possibilities of realistic suggestion. The example which strikes the attention most is of a type which was in later times very much employed by Schubert and many modern song-writers; in which the accompaniment is made to suggest by its motions something external which is referred to in the words; thus making the music as a whole more comprehensively consistent and suggestive. This is the charming aria "Mormorate O fiumicelli" in the opera of *Ercole Amante* (which was brought out in the great gallery of the Louvre in 1662), in which the melody of the voice part as well as the well-managed accompaniment suggest the murmuring of little rivulets:—



It is not unlikely that this is the first example of this very admirable use of realistic suggestion.

Cavalli's serious-minded contemporary Carissimi was very much addicted to realistic suggestion. In his oratorios he hardly ever fails to resort to it to

give point to any situation which offers an opportunity. The wailing of the defeated Philistines is represented by descending chromatic passages, such as in later times became almost a conventional formula for representing distress of mind or sorrow, and which was even endorsed by John Sebastian Bach! The trumpets of the battle are represented in the passages sung by the chorus; the wailing of the daughter of Jephtha on the mountains is made more pathetic by the echo of the concluding phrases of her melodious recitative; and Jonah's disappearance down the gullet of the whale is indicated by a descending passage of the solo voice:—



Of another kind of realistic suggestion an admirable example is afforded by the brilliant little duet in the *Judgment of Solomon* between the women contending about the living child and the dead child, which is life-like in its energy and exactitude to human eagerness in such a situation. Whether the work is by Carissimi or by Cesti, as some maintain, is of no consequence. It is in Carissimi's manner, and he has afforded another example of the same kind of realistic suggestion in the movements in *Jonah*, in which the affrighted sailors ask who it can be that causes the ship to be so remorselessly tossed about by tempestuous weather.

It is not improbable that Carissimi was to a certain

extent responsible for the excessive use of realistic suggestion in English music in the latter part of the seventeenth century. That the English composers had somewhat of a predisposition in that direction is shown by the frequency with which the late madrigal composers introduced realistic devices. Thus, in a famous English madrigal, when the words "running down amain" occur, the voices run down the hill in rapid passages, and they are made to run up where the words suggest such motion. A more artificial form of the device, which is very characteristic of the spirit of Jacobean times, is to make the number of voices coincide with a number referred to by the words. Thus when the words are "first two by two" the quaint conceit is adopted of making only two voices sing, and employing three voices when the words are "then three by three," and when the words are "then altogether," making all the voices combine in pleasant volume. The idea seems rather far-fetched, but it supplies the hint for varying the number and calibre of the voices employed, which is eminently satisfactory from the point of view of artistic effect. When musical energy and sense almost entirely ceased in Charles I.'s reign, the standard of realistic suggestion deteriorated in point and purpose, as in the absurd suggestions of the gyrations of the bird, when "my soul flieth as a bird unto the hill" in Childe's Choice Psalms. Throughout the time of the Commonwealth the new kind of secular music was permeating England and becoming understood, but mainly in lines which afforded no opportunity for realistic suggestion to present itself, for precisely the reasons which have been given for its non-appearance in the classical sonata. For Symphon's

divisions, Rogers's suites and Lock's "little consort" were all absolute self-dependent music making no reference to things outside. But when at last composers "found themselves," and the unfortunately premature genius of Purcell plunged into all the new types of music with words, stage plays, operas, songs, Church music, odes, dramatic scenes for solo voices, dialogues, his copious use of realistic suggestion seemed to give colour to the subtle inference that the utilitarian, objective predisposition of the race finds expression in almost excessive recognition of the sphere of the externals in the musical interpretation of any inner impression. Purcell was a vividly impressionable creature, and evidently felt instantaneously all the aspects of anything which the words expressed; and the methods of art being extremely backward in his time his excessively frequent revelations of a realistic purpose stand out more conspicuously than if he had been able to associate them with richer panoply of accessories. But apart from that it will probably be admitted that the types seem to have an English flavour about them. There are many different kinds: such as the rather obvious quasi-pictorial types, the "twisted serpents," the "girdle round her waist," the "rainbow," the "panting for breath," the "sighs of the lovers," the "shrill trumpets," the "stormy winds," the "elements in discord," the "flying of the Cupids," and so on. Then there is the suggestion of the human emotional states, as in the pathetic air of Dido at the end of *Dido and Æneas*, and the reiterated calls of "Gabriel" at the end of the *Virgin's expostulation*, and the astonishing insight into human mental aberration which is shown in the manifold phases of *Bess of*

*Bedlam*. To this category also should be referred that very singular example where, in *King Arthur*, shivering is suggested by making the voices wobble. Purcell is not alone in this venture, as the device was also used by Lulli in *Isis*, and Cesti in *Pomo d'Oro* makes the chorus express their terror at the fall of the statue of Pallas by "singing in shudders." The very thought of such a thing raises a spontaneous smile, partly because it has the obviousness which is more fit for the amusement of yokels at a parochial entertainment than for the initiated, and partly because it manifestly "runs off the course" and is out of range; since the process must of necessity require the use of notes which are not in the recognized musical scale, and are therefore not identifiable by the performers.

This is a very small matter in itself, but it brings within the sphere of observation the interesting question, how far realistic suggestion may avail itself of effects which are altogether outside the artistic methods recognized in any special branch of art? The answer is in reality so obvious that it would be only excusable to imply it indirectly by discussing what type of mind and what special kind of obtuseness to the whole meaning of artistic method is implied by resorting to such primitive expedients. It is like putting bright-coloured glass into rings in a picture to imitate gems, or velvets or other stuffs to represent garments, or making a hole for light to come through to represent the moon or a clock-face or a star. It is always doubted whether a dog can recognize the portrait of his master, but he certainly would recognize his stick if the painter contrived to insert the actual object. But dogs

unfortunately have not as yet arrived at the standard of mental development which is represented by human art, and what they would recognize would be exactly that which was outside its true circuit; while human beings would instantly recognize that the stick was not presented in accordance with the terms of the bargain; and therefore as far as the picture was concerned the stick would not represent a stick at all, but merely a part of the picture which had been left out. Such things do not really belong to the province of realistic suggestion at all; and in responsible art they are, till recently, of rare occurrence.

The German attitude of mind in connection with music, which has been so splendidly vindicated by their ultimate pre-eminence in that art, is illustrated in this minor sphere. At the very outset of their establishment of individuality as a musical nation Heinrich Schütz provided fair measure of examples of realistic suggestion of the type which was congenial to Teutonic devotionism. It must be acknowledged that he was probably encouraged to attempt such things by the example of his great teacher Giovanni Gabrieli of Venice, who favoured such devices in his new departures in sacred music. Very innocent and attractive examples occur in Schütz's *Resurrection* (*Die Auferstehung*) when the evangelist is reciting the story of the watching of the Sepulchre and tells how the angel came down from heaven and rolled away the stone, the words being "Der Engel des Herrn steig vom Himmel herab," "Trat ihn zu und wälzet den Stein vor den Grabes Thür." The music comes floating down from a high note to represent the descent of the angel; and the rolling away of the



stone is represented by the following quaintly innocent passage for the voice :—

Four Gambas.

denn der En-gel des Herren steig vom Himmel herab. Trät ihn zu und

wil . . . . . zet den Stein von des Gra . . bes Thür.

Schütz also affords plentiful examples of another realistic type in the little choruses in the Passions, in which the passages are so distributed as to suggest the actual manner in which the questions or protests or wrathful cries would have been uttered. The most familiar instance, and the one which gives the strongest impression of being like the reality, is the chorus in which, in answer to Christ's saying "One of you shall betray me," the disciples ask, "Is it I? Is it I?"

The disposition for realistic suggestion grew more and more evident among German composers as the art developed in the seventeenth century; as in the dialogues between God and the Soul and between Christ and the religious minded, which are so characteristic of the period. And this line of suggestion came to its fullest manifestation in the

works of all kinds by John Sebastian Bach which are associated with words. He is perhaps of all the composers most liable to include reference to externals in his infinitely complex musical interpretation of any situation or any salient words. But inasmuch as it is always made subordinate to the intense musical interest and the richness of artistic texture it often passes unnoticed. He always seems to be impelled to follow and represent every suggestion of a word by melodic treatment. If a man falls it is represented by a fall of a considerable and generally noticeable interval. If anything holds fast, or stands firm, he recognizes it by a long note; if sleep is in question its stillness is represented by a long holding note, as in the famous solo in the *Christmas Oratorio* (which was borrowed from the *Wahl des Hercules*) and in a slumber song of great beauty in the second *Trauer Ode*.

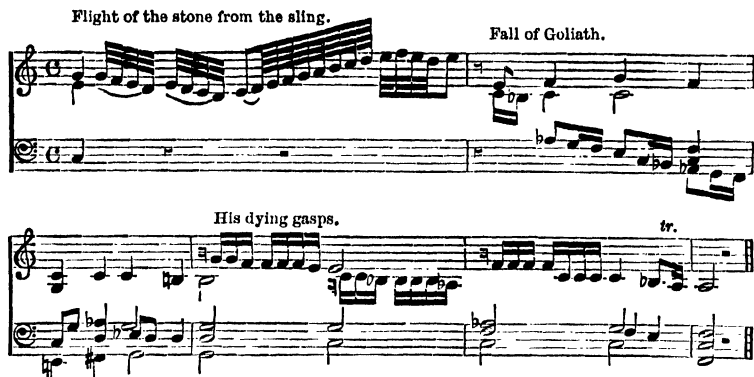
In the fine cantata *Wachet betet* we come across the shuddering of the sinner's soul at the prospect of the Judgment represented by the rapid reiteration of chords. In the same cantata the collapse of the world is represented by a downward leap of the solo voice and a rush downward of the accompanying violins. When the disciples run to the Sepulchre their activity is represented by rapid passages; when laughter is referred to, even in a sacred cantata, the voice-passages are assimilated as near as may be to the recognizable sounds of laughter. The representation of bells exercised a great fascination over him, and there are many examples of the intention to make the accompaniment imply the effect of bells without resorting to the obvious devices of using conventional bell-passages, the most

elaborate and subtle both in suggestion and design being the recitative "*Der Glocken bebendes Getön*" in the great *Trauer Ode*. He even breaks into realistic suggestion in passages which express the most poignant feelings. In the recitative in the *Matthäus-Passion* relating the betrayal by Peter, the voice of the narrator, recalling the words of Christ, "before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice," suggests a cock crow mingled with the graphic representation of the Apostle's weeping bitterly. Again, at the awful moment of the Crucifixion when the veil of the Temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the rending is represented by rushing scales in the basses. Wherever there is dramatic purpose in choruses, the voices are made to express themselves as might be imagined in the real situation; and even the special types of expressive passages in recitatives and ariosos are constantly representative of the inflections which might be supposed to be used by real human beings in the situations which the words imply. It will be impossible to deal exhaustively with the vast amount of all kinds of appropriate realistic suggestion which occur in Bach's works, from the post-horn and the cracking of the whip in the fugue at the end of the *Capriccio* on his brother Paul's departure to join the forces of Charles XII., to the sublime mystery of the "*passus et sepultus est*" in the *B minor Mass*. Bach's habit of thinking of the inner significance of what he was dealing with, and representing it in its emotional aspects, generally relegates his reference to the external aspect to its right subordinate place.

Handel's realistic devices are too well known to need much discussion. The skipping of the frogs in the song about the plague of frogs, the buzzing of

the flies in the chorus about the plague of flies, the tick-tack of the hail, the rushing of the waters, the galloping of the horses, the mysterious suggestion of darkness are all intimately familiar. They serve mainly to localize the suggestion of external events without making the interest solely depend on the realistic device. Of the same order and equally familiar are Haydn's quaint references to the tawny lion, and the nimble stag, the swarms of insects and the "sinuous trace" of the worm.

The early composers of the modern dispensation also took in hand another phase of representative music, namely, that of instrumental programme music, which induced an extension of the use of realistic suggestion in a new quarter. In the forefront of such composers came Johann Kuhnau, Bach's predecessor at the St. Thomas School in Leipzig, who tried to revive the art of Clavier Music, which had been neglected on the continent through most of the seventeenth century in favour of music for stringed instruments. He wrote admirable suites and sonatas, in which there was no occasion for him to refer to things external to music; but the works which invited realistic suggestion, and elicited it from him in very ample measure, are the strange collection of Biblical History Sonatas in which he treated of such subjects as the combat of David and Goliath, the sickness of Hezekiah, the melancholia of Saul, Gideon, the marriage of Jacob. The incidents in the first-named of these various subjects are indicated by quaint and ingenuous realistic passages. The flight of the stone from the sling is suggested by a rapid passage resembling a modern glissando,



the flight of the Philistines by a sort of general scamper, as it is also in the Gideon sonata :—



The rhythmic marching of the Gideonites is suggested by futile passages representing trumpet and drum passages, and the melancholia of Saul by mild musical aberrations. Kuhnau's music, where he is concerned with purely artistic presentation, is quite interesting; when he is trying to imitate or suggest externals he is for the most part extremely dull and commonplace. Almost contemporaneously with Kuhnau, Couperin gave French music one of its rare moments of genuine significance by his unique little works for the clavier, mostly in the form of suites, or, as he called them, *ordres*. These for the most part began with a group of serious abstract movements such as *Allemandes* and *Courantes*, and then proceeded with a number of little movements

called by fancy names. These have been called picture-tunes, but they also represent programme music of the very daintiest description. The subjects, such as *La douce Janneton*, *La tendre Fanchon*, *Les Bergeries*, *Les Ondes*, *Les Abeilles*, *Les Papillons*, *Les Fauvettes plaintives*, *Le Rossignol vainqueur*, *Le Bavolet flottant*, *Le Gazouillement*, *Le Moucheron*, *La Fileuse*, *Les Ombres errantes*, are not in the least emotional, or calculated to give rise to deep feeling; but many of the movements called by such names are most subtle and delicately finished works of art, and within slender limits very convincing. Moreover, the treatment of realistic suggestion which inevitably occurs is not of a commonplace and obvious order, but very delicately glossed and sophisticated. When Couperin resorts to obvious suggestion of the actual, as in the very funny movement called the "*Estropiés*" in the "*Fastes de la grande et ancienne Menestrandise*," it is evidently a joke, and in such sense is very welcome. Rameau, following somewhat the same lines, wrote little programme movements in which realistic suggestion makes its appearance, but it is not so delicately handled as by Couperin.

As has been said above, the period when the classical sonata was sedulously cultivated makes an inevitable pause of considerable duration in the story. But as soon as romantic impulses began to influence the course of events the device reappears again. As has also been said, Beethoven showed his tendencies by resorting to it even in sonatas whose purpose is not defined by a title, but more so in instrumental works which have a definite external idea as their admitted basis, such as the *Eroica* Symphony, the

sonata *Les adieux, l'absence et le retour*, the Pastoral Symphony, with its references to birds and rippling brooks and thunderstorms, and merriment of country folk. He even supplied one singular and inadequate example of programme music in his symphony, *Schlacht bei Vittoria*, in which we find such futilities as "guns to the right of them and guns to the left of them" indicated in the score by black spots where the guns were to go off.

The consummation of the ideal of "the song" as a great and prevailing art-type in the hands of Schubert revealed one of the spheres where realistic suggestion is most serviceable and most at home, and Schubert affords the kind of examples of its use which most clearly suggest its true place in the order of things musical. And he does so without any premeditation. Schubert was one of the most unselfconscious composers who ever lived. He did not reason things out, and he did not of set purpose allot the various factors in his scheme in their due proportions. He was essentially and of all things a musical being, at once vividly impressionable to music and (in a simple-minded sort of way) to human situations of any kind which aroused sentiment. He was also gifted with a phenomenal and almost preternatural facility of production and self-expression, and had, by singular good fortune, never been tempted to listen to the commercial plausibilities and poisonous sophistries which often entirely pervert or extinguish natures of his casual and easy-going type. He was thus ideally placed to deal with the matter naturally and truthfully. When he read over the words of a song what appealed to him was the sentiment, the emotion, the human elements or the human situation, the things

which appeal to human beings most deeply because they are the experiences of human beings like themselves; and he being, as has been said, essentially a musical creature, applied his highest musical gifts to the interpretation of the feelings which the words conveyed to him. Realistic suggestion does not demand the highest musical gifts, it is as a matter of fact quite as readily at the disposal of the very rankest impostor as of the man of phenomenal technique. It is the use to which it is put which shows the difference. It would be almost impossible for a composer who was alive to all the aspects of the situation in "Gretchen am Spinnrade" to ignore the external association of the spinning-wheel. And as it must unfortunately be admitted in these days that a big public is more easily excited by externals than by genuinely or subtly emotional situations, it is quite certain that a commercial composer, if he happened to have enough technique and ambition to rise above the royalty ballad standard, would have made the spinning-wheel so engrossing in its verisimilitude that the general public would have been under no necessity to be aware that Margaret had anything to do with it. A parallel is met with on a large and familiar scale when theatre managers want to induce crowds of the mentally-deficient to support a performance of one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. They make alluring announcements about magnificent mounting, and if they are lucky the crowds come in their thousands, not to hear Shakespeare, but to see the show.

But Schubert was too unsophisticated to trip in such a fashion. He felt that the voice was for the expression of the words and of the mental and



emotional condition of the utterer—as far as mere melody admits of such expression; and he felt that it was the business of the accompaniment to deepen and widen such expression by its aptness of harmony, to make it move by its rhythm, to give the impression of organization, to provide interest of texture, and finally to afford an opportunity for identifying the music with any special human phase or localizing conditions; and only under that very subordinate head does the element of realistic suggestion come in. Taking “Gretchen am Spinnrade” as a type, it may fairly be guessed that a musically endowed person who had never heard of Faust, and did not know there had ever been anything of the nature of a spinning-wheel, would nevertheless enjoy the song as an exquisitely truthful and pathetic interpretation of the human situation; though he would miss the point of the realistic hum which defines and identifies the local significance. And that points to the conditions which it is so important to realize as factors in the essential value of works of art. They establish their hold because they appeal and serve as incitements of interest to so many different types of humanity. Even the superficial minds find something to please them, and there is no doubt that some great works have ultimately come to be widely understood through having obtained a hold at first just by those features which the composer knew to be of least importance. The composer who understands, and does not gloss over what he understands in order to oblige those who do not, gives the essential and the relatively unessential their respective degrees of importance. It is an interesting gauge of the true sense of proportion;

and the ultimate verdict of many thousands of various minds sifts such problems without definitely formulating them. Such songs as "Gretchen am Spinnrade" and the "Erlkönig" and the "Junge Nonne," and the "Leiermann," and "Bächlein" and "Die Post," and hundreds of others in which realistic suggestion is most copiously and subtly employed, maintain their hold because the different mental appeals are so copious and varied, including the reference to external coincidences, and also because essentials and non-essentials are distributed in such just proportions.

Schubert's ways of suggesting the actual have been followed profusely by composers of songs till the present day. There is no need to specify instances, though it may be admitted that the Schumann type of song-composers were less prone to realistic suggestion than later composers; possibly because Schumann was very much engrossed by the emotional contents of what he set, and also possibly because musicians were divided rather decisively into two parties about his time, and the advocates of new paths were rather prominently associated with a type of art which almost inevitably implied plentiful recognition of externals. The composers of programme music in the first half of the nineteenth century fell very much into the same errors as the worthy Kuhnau, and evidently thought that commonplace passages and conventional progressions of harmony were of no consequence so long as they were said to represent something outside music. Berlioz was the most interesting of them all, but even his realistic suggestions often have a very hollow effect in spite of their superficial brilliancy and colour, and they often leave the mind in doubt

whether or no to take them seriously ; as in the case of the apparently grimjoke in the *Symphonie fantastique*, where the artist is hearing in his trance the tune symbolical of the beloved one, and the guillotine comes down and chops off the end of the tune and his head drops into the basket with a couple of thuds.

But it is very different matter when one comes to Wagner. Here, again, there is profusion of realistic suggestion. The splendid overture to the *Fliegende Holländer*, with its unsurpassed suggestion of whirling tempests, seems to give the signal, and thenceforward in all directions the artistic recognition of the external in due measure comes.

At the very beginning of the *Rheingold* the hearer's mind is absorbed and monopolized for a while by the suggestion of deep rolling waters, later comes the rattle of the hammers of the Nibelungs on their anvils, which supplies the basis of the pertinacious leitmotiv of the execrable little dwarf Mime ; then this realistic leitmotiv is combined with the realistic crawling motif of the Dragon in the Vorspiel to *Siegfried*. There is the graphic representation of the rising of the fire at the end of *Die Walküre* ; the familiar suggestion of horses prancing in the motif of the Walkyries, the exquisite mockery of Siegfried's bird, which every one recognizes as a bird song, though no one ever heard bird sing it ! The use of the device pervades Wagner's whole artistic scheme from the highest emotional situation down to the screech of Beckmesser's vicious chalk in the *Meistersinger*. Among composers of first rank Wagner stands in the forefront of the champions of realistic suggestion, together with John Sebastian Bach. His vogue has been one of the most pheno-

menal things in history, and his influence is bound to be proportionate. Even composers who are restive under the dominance of such a personality cannot escape a trend which it gives to the art of the period. To the school of composers who try to transfer Wagner's methods to the concert-room the device has become a matter of course. It would be quite superfluous to multiply instances in confirmation. It is only necessary to point out that the development of the resources of mere technique are applied with the utmost concentration of faculty to create the mental recognition of the share of the externals in the complex of artistic presentation, as is illustrated in the bleating of the sheep in Strauss's *Don Quixote*, the discordant turmoil of trumpets and battle noises in his *Heldenleben*, sundry subtle realistic witticisms in *Till Eulenspiegel*, and, in his recent music dramas, the clumsiness of the executioner in *Salome*, and, in *Electra*, the graphically suggested discomfort of Clytemnestra when she is being murdered.

But in far other fields the resuscitation of the drawing-room order of early Victorian programme music—now often scored for orchestra—depends almost entirely on the enhanced skill of mere technique which composers apply to realistic suggestion. The same old subjects have come back again, which in the intervening time had been laughed out of court, but have been revived because new ways of playing scales and arpeggios and shakes and flourishes, and quaint ways of making odd suggestive noises, have been found out; and these can be amply exploited, with skill which quite entrances superficial minds, in the ever-changing representation of those externals which are most obvious.

The hasty followers of anything which happens to be in vogue are very easily beguiled into ardent support of such conventional trickery. Their argument would be that what Wagner and Bach did was poetical; Wagner and Bach used realistic suggestion; realistic suggestion therefore is poetical; therefore the composers who give us the various aspects of water and the various vagaries or influences of the atmosphere, the cunning tricks of light and shadow, are poetical. The syllogism would not hold one drop of water, but it is not unique on that account! When people want to keep with the pack it is unnecessary to examine their syllogisms very closely; the pack is always delighted to have any kind of argument presented to them which encourages them to go in the direction they want to go.

The fact that the greatest and deepest minded composers employed realistic suggestion must be conceded fully. It is not a question of fact but of proportion. The law of association makes realistic suggestion inevitable wherever reference to things external is made in connection with music, and a composer who turns away from it wilfully excludes something which is part of the subject he is dealing with. The richer and the more susceptible the nature of the composer the more liable he is to make use of the device, because, being highly impressionable, it is inevitable that he should feel, among the many other things he wants to express, some of those physical and external things which are closely associated with the things that move him. But the greater the sum total of the composer the more he uses his means to ends with due sense of proportion. When art is rich and full the sphere of realistic suggestion

is small, when it is slender it is too conspicuous. The spaciouly developed mind is concerned with significances of which the externals are mere transient symbols. The mark of the undeveloped mind is that it is more susceptible to external appeals than to the appeals of true feeling. The commercial art-producer is well aware of it, so is the man who has the morbid craving for being widely appreciated. When art is a mere question of supply and demand it very readily exploits the tricks of realistic suggestion; and the public are easily imposed upon, for they are almost ready to believe the scale of C major is interesting if they are told that it represents a rivulet, though the chances are that very few of them would care about the rivulet if they saw one.

As far as music is concerned it is not the outward aspect of externals but the feelings which they suggest which are the fit subjects of expression. When musical composers compose with genuine musical impulse they unconsciously produce what is consistent with the nature of music, which is to portray not what is seen but what is felt. When they set themselves to use musical sounds, just to seem like the sounds of external things or to suggest motions or external actions and nothing more, they abrogate their true gifts. Time after time in the vista of past music the proofs recur: in Frescobaldi's battle piece, in the mechanical parts of Kuhnau's Historical Sonatas, in Sweelinck's Echo piece for the organ. But when the realistic suggestion is only a small part of the many-sided work of art it serves at once to show the wealth of the composer's mind, and sometimes to indicate conditions which are of importance to the full realization of the subject by the hearer. Even such delicate

little pieces as Couperin's fanciful movements for the Clavecin justify themselves because the allusions to externals, slight as the subject often is, are so subtly managed. And the same may be said of some few modern trifles for pianoforte by Grieg and some recent French composers, which convey subtle suggestions of many things which appeal to the senses very dexterously.

Real dexterity, even in the contrivances for giving passages new effects on the pianoforte, has a certain claim to recognition. Though it may at first be used for trivial purposes, the contrivances may come to be adopted by composers of more real perception for better ends. The better ends are those which have some real hold upon the mind and the emotions. If we take, for instance, the favourite subject of composers of the lightest vein, the forms of water, ordinary waterfalls and fountains only rouse the minds of averagely intelligent people just above their average standard of indifference. If a method of indicating states of mental exaltation and depression were invented, similar to the machinery used for recording barometric pressure, the line would hardly be disturbed at the point where attention was directed to such things. On the other hand, it may be admitted that the first sight of Niagara might be sufficient to raise the vitality sufficiently to make a considerable bound in the line indicating the emotional condition. But it would be for all sorts of various reasons which appeal to the imagination apart from the mere aqueous phenomena. In the first place would probably be the impression of mere volume and power, then the remorseless persistency of its going on for centuries without appreciable variation, then

the vast amount of time it has taken to eat its way through the rock, then the roar, and the littleness and helplessness of man in contact with such forces. Such things might be expressed in music. The mistake of so many composers in making programme pieces is that they overlook what is really interesting, and address themselves only to the minds which cannot at once divine the things that appeal to the imagination. And then, when all is said for it, even Niagara is not human, and the things which humanity finds most interesting are the things which happen to humanity, and human circumstances are the fittest subjects to move men as art is meant to move them. And in connection with human things realistic suggestion falls into its right place in the scheme of art. So that though at the outset realistic suggestion seems to be a matter of comparative unimportance, it proves on closer consideration to be a very good measure of men's intelligence, and also of composers' sincerity. Even the attitude of mind towards art can be gauged by it. The proof that different types of art serve for different types of mind is shown in the fact that the poor and flimsy art is amply represented by the obvious suggestion of waterfalls and inadequate battle pieces, and that the noblest art finds its realistic expression in such moments as the "sepultus est" in Bach's *B minor Mass*.

Moreover, the art in which realistic suggestion is most profusely used is just the art in which it is least legitimate. It is most acceptable in the finest forms of art because the finest forms of art are essentially those in which there are the greatest number of different ingredients. Flimsy art is that which neither dives deep nor spreads wide. Its resources and



purpose are alike limited. So when realistic suggestion is used in such music it follows by simple laws of quantity that it occupies far too great a proportion of the field of view.

Things are interesting in proportion to the manner in which they invite the mind in all directions. The mind grows by what it feeds upon. The art which constantly reveals new phases is a constant source of higher enjoyment. Sometimes realistic suggestion may even show the mind where to look for the new phase. It may invite the attention of the light-minded, where they may afterwards find something more to the purpose to dwell upon. The superficial composer writes his superficiality where all may see it in his misuse of the device, and those whose minds are fully awake are thankful for an opportunity to distinguish true quality in the works which show the true sense of proportion.

## XX

### QUALITY

#### I

THE persistence of mankind in seeking out and learning to understand and enjoy great works of art is very reassuring. Though they may go astray in the wilderness for a whole generation and more, the undying instinct for worth generally enables them to arrive at the goal in the end. It may even take a century or so, as it did in the case of J. S. Bach ; but the few who have the desire for real quality are always searching for "hid treasure," and when good fortune rewards them the public rejoice in their discoveries ; as they did in the case of some of Schubert's instrumental works, which had lain gathering dust in a cupboard for fully a quarter of a century before their existence was revealed.

People whose view is limited to their own time can show good excuse for groaning at the lack of recognition of contemporary talent. When one thinks of contemporary appreciation indeed, it seems a perfect marvel that anything of a high order ever survives, especially in the case of music. Every characteristic of human disposition seems against it. Art requires attention, but native indolence defers

effort. Practical minds lay stress on material considerations; but the higher kinds of art bring no monetary returns except to publishers after the composers have in many cases been obscurely buried. Musical works of an elevated kind require frequent hearing to be appreciated and understood; but the things that get most frequent hearings are those which please at first hearing, while the work which requires frequent hearing seems to be in imminent danger of never getting a second because it did not please at the first. Yet quality tells in the long run. The solid work stands firm and sooner or later finds recognition, while the poor and flimsy work which has had its vogue withers and falls into rubbish heaps.

But there is little advantage in upbraiding a contemporary public for not being able to see through the distractions of fashion, prejudice, partisanship, and specious advertisement. The public would be very glad to be just if it had the discernment and the opportunities. But it labours under disadvantages. It has a very natural suspicion of the prophets of enlightenment, from having had experiences of the results of being too trustful. The prophets who recommend the cheapest wares generally have the loudest voices, and it is not till they have done their vociferous laudations of the works in which they are personally interested that the works they have not been advocating have any chance of attention; and by that time the public is a generation behind. The few advisers of the public who have any real discernment or time to look carefully and find out what a composer means, address themselves to but few readers, and the majority take their cue from those who make use of artificial contrivances for attracting

public attention, to which careless and uncultivated minds are most readily amenable. Sympathetic feeling makes people glad to herd together. But herding does not tend to the discovery of great works of art. Independence of judgment is an almost necessary qualification for the genuine appreciation of anything worth troubling about. The joy of the exercise of any faculties whatever consists to a great extent in finding out for oneself what is enjoyable, and enjoying it because it entails some personal effort to grapple with it. Even the most conventionally minded people often observe that the products of their own cookery taste better than the masterpieces of the lordliest cooks; and the money which a millionaire enjoys spending most is the sixpence which he has somehow contrived to earn. Yet there are not a few people who abrogate their rights of private judgment for the sake of a quiet life. They like companionship and taking things easily, and do not want to be at variance with their neighbours. So they acquiesce, with an internal shrug, and possibly are rather pleased with themselves for their modesty in not obtruding their own independent views, however well grounded, against the indifferent taste or lack of discernment of the majority.

As a matter of fact, enthusiasm for individual works of art and literature or for their producers can be organized as well as a boom in mining shares. In some countries such organization attains to the proportions of quite a fine art in itself, and must be very entertaining to those who practise it. In this country there is less of it than in any other, but that seems to make its inhabitants the easiest prey of foreign methods; with the result that they are

constantly absorbed in one overwhelming obsession after another, some of which pass entirely away in a very short time and leave not a trace behind. The taste which changes so often shows a love of variety, but that does not imply an appreciation of what is most permanent. It is too much like the taste of the Athenians of old. Yet many people would be glad if they could enjoy what is really the best of everything. They know that the only people who are worthy of first-rate literature and art are those who can concentrate their faculties upon the pregnant utterances of strenuous minds. The conditions of social life are against them; but they have always a lurking hope that some definite test of quality can be formulated—some dogma of infallibility by which to distinguish the true from the false. Then they would gladly turn from the beguilements of the clever mountebank and the importunities of the advertiser to follow the true prophet.

But unfortunately it is not in the least degree probable that any such simple and universal touchstones of quality will be found. All the people who think they have found them prove worse than useless, and merely cumber the road of artistic progress. When they think they have found tests to prevent being imposed upon they make them into formulas, and then they set up their formulas as fetishes, and the fetishes, after their kind, invariably stupefy their worshippers, and subsequent proceedings cease to be intelligible to them. To estimate new departures in art by any anticipatory speculative standards is one of the most fallacious of expedients. It was through attempting to be guided by such misconceptions that men fell foul of Beethoven at his

greatest. It was through similar beguilement that some stupendous wiseacre proposed to reharmonize Bach's chorales. It was on similar grounds that people flung contempt at Schumann, sneered at Brahms, and poured out the vials of their hatred upon Wagner. Art is much too complex to be summed up in any formula. The standards change from day to day; new spheres of artistic energy are discovered; and in the bewilderment induced by its chameleon-like properties men fail even to recognize their own tests when they are staring them full in the face.

One of the things which make it so difficult to apply any tests is that the changes which are induced by what is called progress in music are so much more sweeping and extreme than in literature and other arts; which is partly owing to the fact that music is so essentially a modern art, and so much more delicately poised upon the temper of contemporary minds. An illustration is afforded in the effect which is produced by that very widening of the general audience which in the main is so welcome. It used to be the pride of great masters of language to express their most convincing thoughts in the very fewest possible words; and when they hit the very marrow of some fine conception in a close-packed sentence that covered a large area of mental activity, the initiated most gleefully responded. When the uninitiated multitude began to insist upon arts being reduced to the level of their capacities, such economies became futile. Every little superfluous word had to be put in, and the more profuse the recital of the minutest trifles the more the public imagination was flattered. So in the end the pride of the chosen

prophets of the modern *clientèle* of literature, as well, indeed, as of music, is not to say the most with the fewest words, but to say as little as possible with the greatest multitude of them. The inevitable influence of the expansion of the audience is to over-estimate profusion, with the result that "exuberance takes the place of inspiration."

This seems also to follow from other circumstances besides the influence of the big public. The accumulation of artistic methods and resources increases mightily every day. The constant effort of every true artist for centuries past to enhance the means for the expression of his ideas, has put at the disposal of every one who has adequate command of methods a truly colossal variety of artistic devices. The enthusiastic youthful artist with an ample natural outfit of abilities and a vista of new paths opening before him, is impelled, as much by the delight of availing himself of the immense array of materials as by the encouragement of the public, to use everything at once; and the more he can pour out a profusion of artistic effects the more it seems to him that he is paying artistic honour to the idea which he wishes to convey to the public. All this is quite plausible, and quite consistent with the warm-hearted generous joy of life which is appropriate for impetuous youth. As long as it lasts everything seems sacred and to have deep and suggestive meanings. There is no idea of selection or proportion or reserve, and the criterions of the widest public are satisfied by meeting half way their desire for having everything fully explained. Things inevitably tend to the public estimate of the value of a composition being based purely upon the number of notes it contains. Being unhappily debarred by

circumstances from forming any judgment of the intrinsic worth of the ideas presented to them, they salve their self-respect by measuring music on the same principles as they measure their silks and satins. The matter has a two-fold aspect. It is familiarly reprobated by honest lovers of what is really artistic as illustrating the low taste of the public for brilliant dexterities and conjuring tricks. But there are a good many different layers in the public. It may be admitted that the most revolting twaddle has been greedily accepted by hundreds of thousands who are just on the verge of elementary initiation into artistic procedures, and cannot yet distinguish what is vital from what is purely conventional. But there is also another stratum much higher up which is just as much affected by the necessity for profusion. Under favourable circumstances for hearing much music this section of the public has developed a frame of mind which cannot accept any kind of economy or selection for artistic purposes as desirable. Their nerves have become habituated to profusion, and profusion they must have. They do realize how great the resources of art are, and they do take pleasure in seeing them dexterously wielded. The effect of these influences is to make a perfect competition in demi-semiquavers! The old conception of art has gone overboard, and composers are driven even to seek out places in which to insert more and more passages to satisfy the half-developed intelligences. However much the young composer might wish to compete with great heroes of the past in splendid economy, he knows that he would have to pay a penalty he could not face. So he meets the requirements of both the totally ignorant and the superficially initiated public—which is indeed



all that counts numerically—and pours forth chromatic scales and diatonic scales, fancy scales and arbitrary scales, scales in thirds and scales in sixths, and even (wonderfully inventive and adventurous) scales in fifths; and simultaneous scales crossing, meeting, diagonal, wild arpeggios up and down, darting hither and thither, all the instruments in the overgrown orchestra striving to compete with the traditional tricks of the show pianist! The composer's attitude seems to suggest the analogy of the mischievous urchin adorning the board which is sacred to the wisdom of his teachers with reckless chalk. Indeed, when the inspired composer does not even trouble himself to write the notes of a scale or arpeggio he wants the player to romp with, but indicates it by a line drawn across the stave from the initial to the final note, it has a very striking resemblance to the achievements of the chalk-wielding urchin.

There comes about a subtle suggestion of bean-feasting, and what is called in certain circles "having a rollicking time" about all such music. It has become an almost inseparable adjunct of the amusements of the millions who, through the failure of society at large to solve its problems, are condemned to monotonous and ceaseless toil of a stupefying and degrading kind in order just to keep body and soul together. The opportunities of such people for relaxation are too rare for them to consider the quality of their pleasures. Indeed, quality would be sadly out of place, and little better than a mockery. They rush at anything in the shape of pleasure too eagerly to have any discrimination, and it becomes more and more difficult for the composer who wants to write music which really satisfies his own higher

standards of criticism to accommodate himself to the tendencies of public taste. Many people really believe that music is glorified in profusion; and those who imagine themselves to be in the forefront of progress emphasize in every way possible the merit of appearing to be superior to the artistic principles which have been emphasized by really great composers in the past, and not the least of these tokens of superiority is the dazzling effect of excess. It is no doubt meritorious to be eager to recognize progress, but it is open to question whether criterions which imply so much excitement are trustworthy. It has been observable for some time past that as soon as any new paths are proclaimed all the light-headed seekers after sensations hurry off eagerly to see what they are like. To a person of any discernment it is obvious that their being in such eagerness to find something new shows that they never understood the old; and the shallowness that seems to be thereby implied has always made such people the easy victims of charlatans, conjurors, virtuosos, windbags, mountebanks, and quacks. Moreover, it seems probable that if the new paths which for a while attract them so profusely are destined to lead to anything in the end, their advocates will not be among those who arrive at the goal; as most of them would not have had the patience to persist long enough in the quest, but would have gone off in the search of fresh sensations. Even what attracts the light-hearted crowd in the first instance would be the very features of the new departures which are of least value; for the attraction to them would mainly consist of the things which ministered to excitement of the senses, or mere novelty of diction. The novelty wears off when it ceases to be

new ; and sensuous excitements pall when the senses get jaded. The only means of retaining the allegiance of such people is by accentuating and increasing the appeals to sensation and mere commonplace excitements, which are, indeed, just the superficial elements which afford no criterion of the actual intrinsic worth of the music itself.

If a man has any real artistic instinct at all it warns him to distrust this type of enthusiasm, especially when the thing which causes it is decked out with such profusion of tinsel and ornament. But nevertheless he realizes that the profusion represents skill in manipulation ; and so far as such skill is concerned the merit is readily admitted. But it remains to be seen how far the influence of the wide contemporary public ministers to high quality even in this direction. The actual texture of such works is certainly most apt for the instruments which have to perform them. The passages which supply the texture are even for the most part most cunningly selected from the repertoire of passages which are approved by the most practical writers of educational studies. But the aptness of texture is by no means a result of the capacity of the uncultured general audience for discerning what is apt. It is only the result of an obvious necessity. The composer who wishes to dazzle is bound to find passages which are perfectly suited to the instruments on which they are performed, because if they were not suited they could not be performed brilliantly. The unsophisticated public delights in being dazzled, and indirectly this induces a result which appears to be meritorious, without the least intention of doing so.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing in which the

undeveloped mind goes more easily astray than in discerning whether a musical work is perfectly adapted to the properties of the instrument or the conditions for which it is intended. The ingenuous public is not greatly concerned whether the composer is writing organ passages for the pianoforte, or violin passages for the horns, or whether he is writing quartets in terms which are borrowed from the opera, or anthems and hymn tunes in the phraseology of drawing-room pianoforte music. The problem seems to most people so abstruse that their minds will hardly fasten on it. They naturally ask why a man should not try to make a piece of marble look like lace if he likes, or a piece of wood-carving look like wrought iron. The answer has already been given and need not be discussed here, except to point out its bearings in relation to permanence. The confusion of mind which this betokens is purely and necessarily the result of very copious development of artistic methods. To the primitive experimenter who is making any object of art of any particular material it would not be merely absurd to try to make it in some way which was not appropriate to the material, it would be impossible. In an age when men had not discovered iron it would be impossible to carve a tusk or a piece of wood in the manner which would be suitable to iron, because that manner had not yet been thought of. But when the methods of iron-work have been developed, and great skill attained in using the peculiarities of the metal to get the best effects available with that material, a man who was infatuated with such effects might try to produce them in working with other materials, for which they are totally unfit. Such procedure is obviously futile, because the essence of

art is to produce the most perfect effect possible with the materials employed, and the most perfect effect cannot be produced by treating one material with the methods which are essentially suitable not to it but to another.

Yet, however obvious the futility may be, there is no perversion of true artistic fitness which is more universally met with. A man who has been trained to write for voices, and has attained considerable skill therein, gets into the habit of thinking in the phraseology which is fittest for voices; and when he tries to write for violins, he is unable to think in the terms of violin phraseology, and produces only voice parts in disguise. The man whose mind is formed in writing sonatas finds it very difficult not to continue to write sonatas when he tries to write an opera. In such a case the lapse seems pardonable. No doubt he is trying his best, and may be an illustration of the common situation of a man's knowing what he ought to do but not being able to do it. In any case, whether pardonable or not, it is quite obvious that work suffering from such defects cannot be of first-rate quality.

But unfortunately such lapses are not confined to such mild examples. They present themselves in hundreds of phases in all directions, and the public mind is confused and its perception blunted at every turn. In a more subtle form the falsity presents itself in the misuse for mere effect of things which have a definite purpose. The fact that some great architects have sinned in this respect is no excuse, except to the cynically dishonest. In days when things which pretend to be artistic are produced wholesale by commercial firms there ceases to be any pretence of sincerity. A

too familiar example is afforded by such depressing objects as the "villa residences" which are run up in thousands by speculative builders in suburbs of big commercial and semi-fashionable centres and in popular holiday resorts, which are not designed by architects at all but by builders' hacks who imitate the artistic features devised by genuinely inventive architects, without the smallest care for their meaning or purpose. There is no intention to make artistic use of the opportunities to convey personal and individual ideas of domestic or other architecture, but merely to exploit temporary fashions and use characteristic traits which have become familiar through the personal artistic influence of some architect of genius, and to make people think they are showing taste, when in reality they are only showing their capacity for being imposed upon by borrowed phrases which are used without acknowledgment and without understanding. In music, the misuse of other people's inventions, progressions of harmony, phrases of melody, and formulas of accompaniment presents the same aspects. They are met with in hundreds where they show a total lack of understanding of their functions either as structural or artistic factors, or as elements of expression. There is no misdeed of which it is easier to escape conviction—yet there is none which more infallibly shows that artistic morality is at a low ebb; and deficient sense of artistic honesty is sufficient indication that the quality of the work can hardly be of a high order. In such cases the falseness of the style is sufficient proof that no individual personality is expressed in the work.

And this brings us to the edge of that interesting

question how far the expression of some one else's personality, however great, can serve as a certificate of high quality. There are hosts of really susceptible and gifted people who are so influenced by the personalities of great authors and composers that they pour out floods of works which merely reproduce their manner and diction. They appear for a time to be producing works of art, but the lack of personal initiative deprives such works of substance, and consequently of permanence. In passing it may be admitted that such artists and composers have their uses. For inasmuch as the undeveloped mind does not like an unfamiliar style, when some great personality has proved unacceptable because his manner and diction are individual, those who reproduce them at least help to make them familiar and more within the reach of ordinary minds. In other words, the imitators help to make the men they imitate acceptable to the generality; they help even to make them understood. In a very subtle fashion their artistic relation to the man who inspires them, and the activities induced by that inspiration, represent the same universal processes as those of disciples in the sphere of religious ideas. Like the disciples of the founder of a new religion, they repeat his phrases; and though they have not the force of the original they convey something that really moved their souls, and by dint of much reiteration it by degrees lays hold of the lesser minds who would not have been able to digest the original in its highly concentrated form; and as by degrees what had appeared strange becomes more familiar, people become more capable of accepting the actual original. The parallel goes farther. In the sphere of religions

the founders have always appealed to their immediate followers by the cogency of their ideas, and by the manner in which they took possession of men's minds by the depth and width of their thoughts. But as soon as the founders are gone, men have invariably turned to glorify the letter and to lose sight of the spirit which was the original motive force. People in the past who were hypnotized by Handel or Mozart or Mendelssohn or Wagner, or Brahms or Gounod or Bellini, helped to diffuse the appreciation of their prophets in a similar manner, but the imitations were necessarily mainly verbal. As time passes the better instinct of man prevails, and he wants to know the original message; the mere reproductions of verbal manner and of inflections of thought do such work as is fit for them, and then they cease to have significance. Permanence is not for such.

It must be frankly admitted that every artist or composer, however great, must build upon the work of his predecessors, and even the greatest often show the overwhelming influence of some decisive personality of a previous generation, even in little matters of diction and phrase: as Bach in some ways showed the influence of Buxtehude, and Mozart that of John Christian Bach, and Beethoven that of Mozart in his early years. But it is in building wider than the mere individual example and expressing something essentially his own in his own terms that a man achieves the really great works of art which will maintain their hold upon the world. Imitation only merits respect in the degree in which it shows appreciation of high quality in the things or man imitated, and in after days men will not go to the works of those who give second-rate examples of



diction, but to the originals. There are plenty of different aspects to this situation. One of them obviously is that lack of permanent quality is owing to the composer or author having no real live genuine initiative in himself, and not presenting his own individual thoughts in individual terms, but merely babbling other people's thoughts which have fascinated him.

The same disqualifications apply to a man who has no feeling for the spirit and cultivates only the letter, and to the man who spends all his time in shuffling endless words, with no idea that words ever mean anything. If wholesale imitation is a bar to recognition, wholesale adoption of conventions is so equally, and for much the same reasons. A convention is a thing that has got ossified and has ceased to have any life in it. It is obvious that things that have no life in them are not going to last. The very first necessity of permanence is life, not mere stability—as there will be occasion to discuss more fully later.

In art, lack of life is lack of personality. Nearly all the millions of arias, which were written by the Italian opera composers of the early part of the nineteenth century, are little better than waste paper, for they represent nothing in the way of personality. They are merely a paltry toying with and rearrangements of a convention in which the most striking feature was the positive impudence which is implied by the fatuous use of vulgar, commonplace, idiotic, and pointless ornamental passages, without so much as a redeeming quality of real artistic interest. That humiliating phenomenon, the "royalty song" of the past half-century, was similarly made up of familiar snippets and snacks of

contemporary musical slang and catch phrases, serving, like the "villa residences," to cajole a class that has been merely made more stupid by the artistic facts that have knocked at the door of their minds and have failed to obtain admittance. There is no real personal quality in them, and the course of their pampered lives is the shortest possible. The hastiest glance of the practised eye is sufficient to gauge their quality. Musicians whose faculties are adequately developed can almost see by the look of a page, even of full score, whether the use of material and method is individual or not. The mere use of successions of harmony which are certified to be correct counts for little beyond academic respect; the mere use of forms of melody which are elegant, nicely balanced, and pleasant to toy with counts for very little if they have no characteristic flavour; the mere use of clever counterpoint and clever combinations of many melodies deserve but little more than respect for skill; the mere use of formulas, such as scale passages, arpeggios, conventional figures of accompaniment, and profusion of ornament, counts for nothing unless they have some intelligible function each in their proportion which ministers to the interpretation of the idea.

As the art grows richer in resource so does the responsibility of the individual composer extend. The changing aspects induced by development cannot unfortunately be ignored. At every stage of the process opportunities are enhanced, and those who understand art distrust any man who ignores them. Moreover, enhancement of opportunity goes in equal step with the enhancement of the range of general human conditions. If art becomes more complex, so does human nature. If art becomes

more comprehensive, so does human thought. The personality which is representative of a given age or generation needs must express itself with the fullest resources of that age and generation, because the methods of a previous generation would be inadequate; indeed, not only inadequate, but untrue. Distaste for the admixture of base and blatant diction and false method often makes sensitive natures fly from the vulgarities and shams of contemporary life and try to live again in the style of earlier ages. The result is but a pathetic failure at best. Bogus archaicism is impossible as a genuine vital reality of art. There is no such turning back possible. We may look at a sample with tender affection, with intimate sympathy, but the very idea of any simple imitation of works of an earlier age being permanent or exercising any real influence on mankind is too absurd to require consideration. Man is doomed by the fatality of his birth to be part and parcel of the age in which he is born. He has no more choice in the matter than he has in the choice of his parents. His personality, if it stands out from the context at all, must of necessity be the sublimated essence of the essential qualities of his time. The leader is indeed fed by the predispositions of those he is to lead. The thoughts he presents to them are but the definite formulation of ideas which are inchoate in their minds, lying there waiting to be revealed. The man who seems to lead but touches the strings that are ready to vibrate.

But there are many strings that are ready to vibrate; and those which respond most readily are those which are set in motion by the baser and lower instincts—they respond much more quickly, and also

cease to vibrate more quickly, than those that sound in concert with higher instincts, because they are made of slighter materials. The foundations of what is essentially right are as deep as the universe; the things which make for disturbance are comparatively superficial and pass away. It is so in art. The flimsiness and falseness of cheap and cynically commercial devices become apparent when there is time to consider them; and that is what helps mankind to keep ceaselessly in touch with what is really progressive. As has been said above, the things which are made of false materials rapidly disintegrate, and keep no hold upon the mind; the things that have true quality remain.

## XXI

### QUALITY

#### II

QUALITY is that which endures ; that which maintains its vitality and speaks to men and arouses their interest in spite of changes of fashion, changes of taste, changes of method and even of language. The shortest lived of all artistic products are those which merely catch the caprices of passing fashions. For a fashion is nothing more than the transitory fancy of the lightest and most superficial minded : such as have no mental independence or initiative, but merely exist under the influence of whatever externals happen to catch the attention, and realize nothing but the unimportant trifles which appear on the surface of things. Illustrations of the utmost triviality are afforded by the caprices of taste in the matter of dress. If a male creature of the average type sees other male creatures of his class with hat-brims broad and curved, hat-brims broad and curved afford him much gratification, and it seems to him important to procure a hat-brim broad and curved like those of his fellows. If the next year he sees other men with hat-brims narrow and flat, hat-brims narrow and flat appear to him to be desirable ; and again in similar manner, as soon as may be, he makes his appearance with

hat-brim narrow and flat, and to appear with hat-brim broad and curved appears to him not to be in accordance with right-mindedness. Similarly if a member of the sex which more admittedly and openly seeks for beauty of personal adornment sees others of her sex flaunting in sumptuous extravagance of flowing unrestricted draperies, such flowing draperies become beautiful in her eyes, and, however unsuited to her personal charms, she is impelled by imperious necessity to adopt such adornment for herself. But soon again if many members of her sex appear in close-fitting prim coyness of puritanic simplicity, the flowing draperies cease to be desirable, and garb of a less ample type becomes the token of tastefulness. But all the while it does not mean that flowing draperies have ceased to be beautiful, but only that minds that are lacking in vitality require frequent change, because the things that afford them pleasure are limited, superficial, and speedily exhausted; and that, having no hold upon the things which appeal to a wider and more comprehensive intelligence, they are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of suggestion. So it comes about that since the lightest minds love change they must seek their pleasures in things which can change easily, which have no real importance, no necessary function or utility, and can vanish into space without causing any derangement even of domestic economies. The foundations of things and the great deeps do not change easily. Too much is involved. The minds that love change for change's sake are self-condemned to be incapable of appreciating the things which are deeply set and profoundly significant. So for those whose mental outfit is feeble the superfluities are predetermined to be of greatest importance.

The attitude towards art of those whose mental stamina are slender is just the same as their attitude towards their clothing. They are concerned mainly with trifles, with things that are as nearly as possible superfluities. A phrase or a melodic formula or even a musical interval takes the light fancy of the mindless section of the public and becomes as universal as a fashionable hat-brim. The fashionable phrase is not confined to one composer or even to one country, but reappears everywhere with just a trifling adjustment to climate (temperamental or otherwise) and is for a time the one and only thing which appeals to the majority. The amount of mind given to such trifles is so small that deeper questions of artistic fitness or beauty do not come into question. In fact, people who are dominated by mere fashions are mostly quite unaware that there is such a thing as art, and act as if the world could very well do without it. And as far as the art that fulfils their requirements is concerned they are quite right. If they are only capable of being pleased with the little tags and types of phrase which happen to be fashionable, it proves that they are either inattentive or, in this connection, half witted; and to people in such a condition the only art that is intelligible is trivial art; and trivial art is as poisonous and as degrading as any other kind of triviality. Indeed the world would be better without it. Possibly if they realized that it was trivial even light-minded people would repudiate their having been implicated. But this they cannot do without giving a little more of their minds to the matter.

The wholesome saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," gets more

and more difficult to apply as the world gets older—partly because there is an ever-increasing host of things to do and it is hard to decide which is most worth doing with all one's might, and partly because people have to do so many things that do not seem to be worth doing at all out of mere neighbourliness. The result is sometimes surprising. Men of considerable mental powers, through inattention, get into strange company. For instance, they may not concern themselves a jot about their hat-brims, but contentedly take whatever their hatter gives them, and through mere lack of attention they appear for an occasional space to belong to the class which rejoices in being in the forefront of fashion. Similarly they may regard art as a matter outside their sphere and treat it with inattention; and as they therefore only give half their minds to it they are, in relation to that subject, among the half witted. Yet their attitude towards it is not without significance. Men of great mind may possibly regard art as being outside their province for reasons which there is not room to discuss here—but men of fine temperament and alertness of mind have an instinct for what is finely said in art; without any knowledge or aptitude, and without having applied their minds to it, they can scent triviality, discount mere vain repetitions, and recognize the diction which beguiles without having anything to say. They often feel greatness without being able to locate its particular proofs, and develop powers of discernment in spite of themselves. When men of undoubted mental powers show a liking for trivialities and futilities in art, it may be because their actual capacity for understanding the artistic language is abnormally defective, otherwise



it seems likely there is a flaw in their temperamental outfit.

But all the same there is a well-known way of misleading even the elect. Every one is aware that in literature as in music it is easy to move men with mere mastery of language. An author with exceptional sensibility for mere sound can make such use of grand and impressive words, and can keep up such a fine resounding flow of them, that men take delight in the mere splendour of his periods, and extol his supreme mastery of means without caring much for what he expresses. The mastery of such things is a part of art of all sorts, and indeed a very important part of it. People who have something to say and do not possess it are rather at a disadvantage. The greatest masters combine both thought and splendour of words, and make their thoughts persuasive even against reluctance by the beauty and poise of their language. It is the combination of the two which makes sure of what they produce being permanent; but when they are not conjoined the depth and truth and fervour of thought may produce the quality that endures, sometimes all the more for the clumsiness of the diction; but the mere impressiveness of sound and manner will not. And this naturally invokes the question of style.

Style is not by any means conterminous with beauty and impressiveness of diction. Style, as has been said before, is the perfect adaptation of means to ends. It has been shown how it is affected in various branches of music by physical considerations. That is only one side of the matter. It is also affected by consciousness of what is best to say and the manner in which it is best to say it to the

particular audience which is to be addressed. The true instinct of the orator is to gauge at once the disposition and mental standard of his audience, and to feel what manner of speech will most readily lay hold of them. He will not weary a brilliantly intelligent audience by explaining points which they can guess with a mere hint; he will not vex an audience that comes to hear a philosophical discourse with untimely jests, or mar a period of fine language addressed to cultured connoisseurs with unseasonable slang; neither will he bewilder simple-minded country folk with abstruse and subtle definitions or remote and recondite problems couched in technical terms. To each of the different types of man there is a style of address which is specially adapted. And in this view it is to be noted that the problems of style become more difficult as the world grows older, because the number of types is constantly on the increase. There is an ideal style which is just suited to each stratum of society. In literature and journalism it has been subtly evolved by writers having in mind the exact type of readers they are addressing; very often living among them and quite permeated by their special habits of speech and tricks of phrase. There is the style for the literary people, the style for the scientific people, the style for the highly imaginative people, the style of the high art expert, the style of the denominational religious organ, of the political party periodical, of the football correspondent, of the reporter of horse-racing, of Sunday evenings at home for good little girls, and of adventure stories for bad little boys; and hundreds of thousands more. Each in its peculiar sphere may be, as far as style goes, first rate, and each becomes bad by loss of consistency.

When people go into ecstasies about style they frequently confuse the means with the matter which is to be conveyed by the means. Though in special types of style, addressed to fine types of mind, the manner in which a vast field is covered by dexterity in suggestion and by that splendid perfection of economy which packs the utmost possible meaning into the fewest possible words, approximates to a guarantee of quality; yet even in such exalted phases it is not the style by itself which betokens quality, but the thing which is expressed together with the style. The style cannot be segregated from the thing which is conveyed in the style any more than it can be independent of the conditions to which it is adapted. As a matter of fact, style never can possibly exist by itself. It is admirable when it fulfils its purpose, which is to convey ideas to particular types of people by particular means. If the ideas and the people and the means are not there the style is not there either. It is a contingent abstraction.

Yet it conveyed the idea of something concrete and self-dependent in former days because men associated it with a particular type of art and literature, in which connection it was known as "Classical Style." But classical style really only stood out as the one and only distinguished style because it was associated with a thing which had proved permanent. It had a wider appeal because it was devised at a time when society was not split up into such thousands of different branches and sections and coteries, each with its own special style. Style was more general than it is now and appealed to a wider audience, and therefore its

foundations were solidier and it was likely to last longer. When style is differentiated into hundreds of different types it is less likely to minister to the permanence of the art work in which it is manifested, or, in other words, to represent quality. Men might study the jargon of one of the periodical sectarian effervescences of America as a curiosity or a puzzle, or a psychological problem, but as a proof of quality it would hardly count at all.

Yet for certain types of humanity style is very nearly all in all. And the traits which distinguish that type will serve to emphasize the status of style as a criterion of quality from another point of view; and will also indicate a fresh way of estimating the pretensions of the people who set so much store by it.

It is a mere matter of observation that a special type of music, in which skill of mere diction vastly exceeds the value of what is said by it, is most attractive to a special type of modern humanity. It is the type of music which is full of flounces and furbelows, with pretty little ribbons and bits of tulle put in at every convenient corner. It is the music of those whose highest female ideal in life is to be daintily dressed, and to be seen daintily dressed; and whose highest male ideal is devotion to the society of that type of the eternal womanly. Apart from the prime responsibilities of dress, this class spends its existence in an unbroken circle of daily amusements, pleasures, and indulgences; and it keeps at bay some of the penalties the mind exacts for being neglected by cultivating excessive vivacity in mere talk; in the art of presenting everyday occurrences in amusing

lights, and also by developing pure sensibility to the highest pitch compatible with the average standards of public decency. As a rule, the minds and imaginations of people in such society become atrophied. When any one talks of anything which requires a little mental exertion to understand they are annoyed. A subtle kind of rule becomes established which limits the range of conversation to personal matters—such as amusements, sport, social functions, the characters of their acquaintances, and dress. A good deal of cleverness or at least smartness is developed in this sort of conversation. Though the subject-matter is purely trivial, it is expected that the treatment shall have some savour and dexterity about it. Such people are often musical after a fashion. The art serves as an additional factor in their scheme of amusements, and it is an exact counterpart to the scheme of their lives. They take great delight in merely brilliant and superficial music, of calibre almost identical with their talk, and often develop considerable aptitude for discerning whether a thing is good of its kind. But in such a connection anything of the nature of seriousness is inconceivable. Everything which implies mind is prohibited, and anything which required real sustained attention would be useless. The happy habit of sipping here and sipping there, which by false analogy is thought so pretty, makes the mind incapable of realizing any connection between points which are a short distance apart. In such music things must just follow one another, and that is all. There is no coherence between one part of it and another. It is the counterpart of the old-fashioned *pot-pourri* disguised by the invention of new dexterities of technique. The technique

of the pianoforte, for instance, is consequently progressive. Liszt and his fellows invented many effective new ways of playing scales and arpeggios and shakes and ornamental passages, and the course of time has enabled clever players to discover enhancements of these ingenuities. The new discoveries make the old seem pale, and the admirers of that kind of art think the old formulas stale and old-fashioned. But in reality there is no change to speak of. It is merely a change in the aspect of the surface, not in the substance or deeper qualities of the music. It is a change of the means without any change in the meaning; a mere way of presenting a sentence differently, not a change of anything which the sentence represents. To those that come after, the things such people think so wonderful will be just as absurdly hollow as the analogous music of the virtuosi of the early part of the nineteenth century does to people of to-day.

It may be excusable to hint at two extraordinarily spacious examples of the fallacy of over-valuing style. The absolutely stagnant condition of the Chinese Empire for more centuries than most other nations have existed at all was the result of an attitude of mind most aptly expressed by their making style the highest criterion of worth. The degeneration of Rome was not induced by such an attitude of mind, but it was widely characterised by great culture and excessive estimation of style. It is perhaps indeed permissible to infer that excessive over-valuation of style is a decisive indication of decadence.

Another side of the effect on human beings of living indolently indulgent lives is the development

of abnormal susceptibility. It is the inevitable result of excluding the intellectual. The human being of that type becomes specially susceptible to colour and quality of tone. To enjoy the thrills of sensibility derived from very subtle effects of sound such as are now universally classed as colour effects, requires no energy or exercise of mind or body. It merely requires the creature to be receptive. The real function of colour in music is to enhance human susceptibility to what has to be said by other means, such as melody or harmony. But these latter require some mental activity to discern, and are not welcome in their higher phases to those who want merely pleasant feelings. But appeals to sensibility must be constantly enhanced because the nervous centres get jaded when they are too continuously excited. So there is a cumulative process—the art of colour-effect constantly becomes more elaborate, and the human creature becomes more morbidly receptive; and the intellectual elements of art are more and more edged out of sight! But these subtle appeals to a hyper-sensitive condition differ only in kind from the appeals of mere noise. It is a familiar fact that where much stress is laid upon noise the volume of sound has to be constantly increased even to retain the appreciation of those who delight in such impressions. The means of producing volume of tone have been conspicuously and constantly increasing in recent years; and the recent phase of subtle colour effects requires a parallel increase of means of producing unfamiliar colours, which is illustrated by the singular craving which has been manifested in recent years to introduce new instruments into the orchestra. We may admit that the appreciation of

colour effects represents more subtle developments of musical sensibility than the delight in mere power of sound. Noise is the element which appeals to the mere animal, the brutish side of man. The perception of exquisite effects of tone is always associated with highly developed nervous sensibility. But this does not make such effects any less appeals to the senses. They are refined appeals, appeals even to the conditions of morbidity, appeals to the states that are the result of over-culture or of over-indulgence; and they are capable of being sedatives and stupefiers when they occupy disproportionate surface. Colour effects are no more capable of forming the basis of a wholesome life-giving art, or serving as a proof of lasting quality, than are arrangements of interesting, or curious, or highly gratifying smells. They show their nature by their fruits; for those who resort to them begin to manifest that singular demoralization which takes pleasure in the kind of progressions which the judgment of all the sanest and most liberally endowed of great composers in the past has eschewed, and also an ominous disposition to revert to the practice of repeating phrases and passages wholesale without any artistic purpose, which seems to suggest a weakening of the powers of the mind.

This is indeed such a very important aspect of the same situation that it requires to be considered fully. Its features present themselves equally in the classes who have become incapable of using their minds through indolence and the classes who have never had a chance of finding out what a mind was meant for. It may be recalled that aimless repetition is the resource of savage and undeveloped races. In works



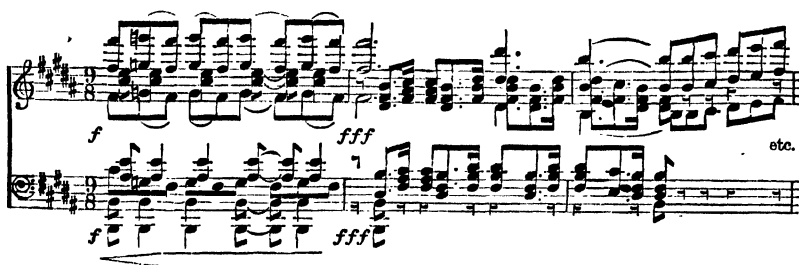
with any genuine purpose in mature conditions of art, repetition is used to afford opportunity for showing a thought in a new guise, for showing transformation of ideas, for inviting the mind to see identity in diversity, for showing the phases which the same thought may pass through, for showing how the same starting-point can lead in different directions or for providing the basis of organization, as in such a form as the ground bass. When it is mere undisguised repetition it suggests that the minds to which it is addressed do not take things in at first hearing and that their capacity of attention is beginning to grow weak. In this connection it is impossible to pass unnoticed a very singular coincidence which illustrates the manner in which influences coming from diverse quarters converge to the same ends.

Almost simultaneously with the conspicuous appearance in art of features which imply a relaxation of the powers of attention and intelligent appreciation, the music of the eastern peoples of Europe has come very much into vogue. The Czech composers such as Smetana and Dvořák led the way, and the Slav composers followed by a natural sequence. Even in the works of the Bohemian composers the proximity to the primitive temperamental man was much more apparent than in the much-elaborated music of Teuton and Celtic races. And one of the tokens of the fact was this very practice of repeating little phrases over and over again, which has been so often observed to be the delight of the undeveloped savage. In the Slav composers the practice is even more conspicuous than in the early Bohemian composers, since they dive much further into the region of the primitive man. The veneer which just glosses over the

elemental savage is so thin that it is often easy to see through it in music as much as in social conditions. But it is not only in this that the proximity of the primitive is apparent. The unmitigated savage loves to be excited by colours and also by sheer uproar. He gladly avails himself in music of the inventions which it has taken more civilized races centuries to evolve to produce a subtle intoxication of the senses by the juxtaposition of every conceivable shade of colour (which is the primitive phase of the recognition of relativity); and he also rejoices in their employment for effects of sheer noise which induce states of little less than frenzy. There is an art in these things too, as may be seen in the cunning device of reducing tone to next to nothing,



in order to rouse the hearers to a more furious pitch of excitement when the utmost roar of all the available instruments plus-fortissimo is brought to bear upon them by a craftily graduated increase of tone:—



It is not of any use at all for western composers to compete with such strokes of genius. They are

genuine in their way, but they belong to a totally different order of humanity, to a type which can do such things frankly without realizing what they mean. The western composer belongs to a different order. He represents all the difference between peoples who have passed through centuries of effort to understand what life means and those who have hardly begun to think at all. But it must sadly be admitted that the conspicuous entrance of such art upon the scene affects the attitude of the very big audience of the big public. They get accustomed to the devices of the composers who are in closer contact with beings that are hardly raised above savagery, and finding they flatter their mental indolence and satisfy their desire for excitement, naturally think their own western composers should supply them with music made after the manner of the semi-oriental races.

Yet there are many aspects to the question. It is quite right that civilized people should extend the sphere of their imaginative sympathies. To be reminded through music of the types of humanity which we have left behind some thousands of years ago is refreshing. It gives the welcome sense of being free for a little while from the incubus of over-elaborated civilization; of reaching out a hand to primitive types of our own species. Within such a range the western composer might possibly draw fresh nutriment from the poetic and human suggestions of the art of the Slavs and Czechs. But so far as their methods represent mere undisguised appeals to excitement of the senses, the attempt of Occidentals to imitate is predestined to inevitable failure and disintegration. As has been pointed out,

the taste for the music of these semi-oriental races became prominent with singular aptness just when tendencies of taste which had a similar implication were already manifesting themselves in western art itself. The excess of colour especially appealed to those whose sensibilities were more alive than their minds, in east and west alike.

But there is yet another aspect which has been referred to before in which the excessive valuation of mere colour appears to be especially congenial to the western type. The dread of the obvious which is a kind of bugbear of certain clever minds drives them to feel outraged at any clear and definite statement. And to such minds the cultivation of mere colour effects is a heaven-sent resource, for colour effects commit them to nothing. They are in that sense one of the allurements of impressionism. It is often said that a really great impressionist can use mere colour with such skilful appeals to associations that he seems to suggest the terms of line and form to the sympathetic mind; and in one notable instance such a view is vindicated by the fact that one of the most famous of impressionists was also a very skilful etcher. If every man who devoted himself to the exploitation of mere colour effects first proved himself to be a master of the difficult technique of definition, the world would be spared a good deal of mystification. Impressionism is always closely related to the type of mind of the period in which it is produced. If that type of mind has not any wide qualities which also belong to other periods, that impressionist art will appear to human beings of other times as mainly incredible daubs. Honest impressionism requires the experience of three

score years and ten, but it is very liable to be favoured by the presumption of under one score and one, and there is hardly any weakness whose influence is so utterly demoralizing.

Impressionism is too often merely a device to evade the responsibilities of style, for in simple truth the dread of being obvious is not a trait of those who really have something to say, but rather of those who want to appear to have something to say and are afraid that if they speak plainly the world will find out that they have nothing. And the same is the case with those who evade obviousness by over-elaboration. The business of style is to make plain what a man has to say ; to make the most recondite thought clear to those to whose minds the style is truly adapted. But many people seem to think it a sin in art to be easily intelligible, and deliberately go to work to sophisticate what they have to say. But the view that sophistication of the obvious is one of the highest objects of art is a curious misconception, for it tends to make the ideas difficult to realize instead of easy. The conception of adorning a thought with all the graces and ingenuities at the disposal of an artist, as the German composers of the seventeenth century did with their chorales, is quite a different matter. They did not try to sophisticate or to puzzle the hearers, but to adorn, and to set a well-known and much-beloved fact in a shrine. But when a man sets to work to present his thought in a flamboyant manner, it gives rise to the suspicion of two alternatives, either that he is trying to beguile the innocent, or that he is adorning what is not there to prevent people finding it out. It is a procedure better adapted to the Oriental type

of mind, which delights in weaving infinite complexities of ornamentation all about nothing. The true Occidental soon tires of such aimless ingenuities and craves for a manner of presentment which will effect something in a direct and decisive manner. It is not the decoration which gives life to an idea but the vitality of the idea itself. The lesser minds take great delight in the decoration, the more energetic minds appreciate the decoration also, but only as accessory. The very finest words are worthless if they do not originate in the impulse to convey thought or arouse it. It would seem to be quite silly to discuss the matter if it were not that man's mind gets confused, and that in discussing mere technique and method and beauties of diction up and down and backwards and forwards, the fact that they only exist as means to ends passes out of sight. Splendid technique and language, the royalest gifts of expression, are undoubtedly among the things which rightly rouse men's enthusiasm. But the finest powers of artistic expression are the result of the fervour begotten by the ideas. A man who makes works of art by cold intellectual synthesis, however great his mental power, must inevitably be left behind by those who are capable of being thrilled to a spiritual exaltation by the delight of splendid artistic thoughts, or even of thoughts external to art which are capable of being expressed by it.

As has been pointed out in Chapter VIII., the real composer when the happy state of productivity comes to him is in a sort of state of clairvoyance, for the artistic faculties are so heightened and subtilized that a vast number of artistic possibilities spring to the mind at once—melody

in the aptest shape, harmony of just the right significance, form that presents points in their true relations, rhythm that makes the pulses beat and the muscles long to spring into activity, colour that excites the sensibilities in exactly the right phases, dexterity in placing the phrases effectively and modelling them perfectly in their relation to other phrases, insight to interweave the strands of thought, delicate sense of proportion in the distribution of emotional and sensuous crises, subtle suggestion of things that awaken long vistas of association! They all spring up in the composer's mind, and, at his happiest, at least approximately in the right proportions. Such a complicated combination is quite out of the range of mere intellectual synthesis! It is a special abnormality. No wonder artists, and especially musical composers, are reckoned to be conceited. When they come back in a cool and normal state to look at what they have done they may almost laugh in wonder how they came to do it. It is almost as if it were somebody else who had temporarily taken possession, or some capricious spirit that only occasionally deigned to exercise its powers.

The visitations of this strange accession of power, or sensibility, or inspiration, or whatever it is, seem to a great extent to be a matter of chance. But they are so only in the same sense that all mental powers are matters of chance. The infinity of causes which are behind every effect utterly surpasses all intellectual powers of calculation. The most gifted orator in existence never knows a few minutes before he faces his audience whether his best powers will be at his disposal. He always clings to the hope that his reputation (which is a form of suggestion) will

prevent people from judging him absolutely by what he contrives to do on the special occasion. The saving grace of reputation is a very merciful way of spreading the estimate of a man's gifts over a number of his achievements, instead of exalting him to the level of the gods or debasing him to the level of the creeping things for one. But the man who has the finest temperament, the greatest sincerity and capacity for fervour, whose whole standard of thought, whether artistic or general, is constantly pure and elevated, is the likeliest to be able to rely upon artistic powers being at his disposal when wanted. And it is such qualities in the man which minister to the personality. And without some personal definition it is useless to hope for quality. The man who is destined to be a painter or a poet or a composer sets out on his life's journey with certain aptitudes in connection with paints or pencils, or words or sounds; but the nature and value of the products which he is going to make through these aptitudes depend on his personal qualities, and on the particular uses to which those qualities lead him to put them.

It has been observed that since the classical type of art was superseded by the romantic phase the sphere of personality has been constantly enhanced, and the individuality of the composer finds constantly more scope. In the classical order of art there were many things which were not expedient, which the guardians of æsthetic morality banned, things which were too ugly and aggressive for such a reticent scheme. But once the emotional element is courted there is no limit to the liberty of the composer, so long as his work produces evidence to justify his actions. The human mind is now apparently incapable of conceiving



anything sufficiently hideous in itself to be excluded from modern music. The only thing it still retains is the right to object to such hideousness being in the wrong place. Extravagant, absurd, violent and painful progressions are not judged by themselves but by their relation to the context.

But the freedom in the matter of self-expression which the romantic phase has brought with it emphasizes the virtue of economy. Economy is one of the subtlest tokens of fine style as ostentatious wastefulness is one of the most invariable tokens of vulgarity. Wanton disregard of the very decencies of economy brings retribution just as much in art as in things outside it. Wanton lack of economy in finance ultimately arrives at bankruptcy. Wanton use of denunciations leaves the orator ultimately without a resource. Wanton use of violent appeals to the senses exhausts the resources of art without enhancing the methods by which it grows. The highest ideal of the sanest speaker or poet is to say the utmost possible in the fewest words. The absolutely compact sentence with every word and every accent in the right place fills him with contentment. And it is the same with music. The man who protests too much does not beget conviction. As men get away from the first excitement of the hubbub they perceive there is a waste of force. It repels them to hear a man turning on all resources of noise-making machinery to arouse emotions which could more effectually and truthfully be moved by a single string on a single violin if a man had the skill to use it aright. It is felt to be an appeal to a lower order of perception, where the use of the higher kind of art would be addressed to the minds which were adapted

to feel and understand the use of higher means. And the use of the lower means only makes those who submit themselves to them less apt to appreciate the higher methods of art. Moreover, the use of the lower means as a concession to the lower minds betrays the character of the man who uses them; and so, with other phases of his work, affords evidence as to whether it is likely to be enduring or not. It is not that which appeals to the lower minds which endures but that which appeals to the higher. And the personality which appeals to the higher type is that which conveys the greatest scope of thought and feeling in the fewest terms that can, under any special circumstances, be exhaustive.

In practical matters the definition of the higher type of mind is that which can hold the greatest number of considerations or arguments for and against in their proper and just relations. Put in the simplest form it is not far wrong to say that the highest type of mind is that which can think of the greatest number of things at once. When the mind is called upon to grasp a thing which is so complex that the said mind is incapable of taking it in, the mind aches after its peculiar fashion and communicates its discomfort to the human being, whose feelings thereupon react in rage or despair, or whatever other forms of mood happen to be characteristic of that particular human being.

Many things in art as elsewhere become intelligible on this hypothesis. It is aggressively obvious from the pronouncements of men who have written about music for the last five hundred years, from De Muris downwards, that the things which professed judges hate with the most extravagant fury are not the

grossly distorted and impudent frauds, cynical immoralities, pretentious vulgarities, self-complacent ineptitudes, products of incompetence, ignorance or dishonesty, but the things which happen to be out of the range of their intelligence; in the sense that their minds are not provided with sufficient variety of receptive compartments to take in the factors which must be assimilated and balanced, one with or against another, before the work of art can be appreciated. Every one who has had any experience of the world of art must be able to recall instances in which they have seen really musical people infuriated by some new music of an exceptionally high order. The records of music are positively full of such things. The explanation is the simple formula "the lesser cannot contain the greater." As an actual fact of observation, music of the highest order which requires some little developed intelligence to take in, produces no more effect upon the mind insufficiently developed to receive it than mere nonsense syllables. It leaves such minds absolutely and positively blank. The sympathetic chords which are required to vibrate in response are not there. The result is as sure as a physical law. This is probably the explanation of that puzzling fact that though orientals prove capable of learning European instruments and playing European music with much effect in military bands, they find it in the main so uncongenial and so unintelligible that they always drop it as soon as their official duty-performance is over and return to their elementary barbarities; and that is not because the music played by military bands has been till recently so blatant, common and vulgar, but that, in spite of it, it has too many sides, too many factors for

orientals to take in, and that the countless associations which have grown up round certain types of phraseology are entirely unknown to them. To them the most deeply felt of European music would seem dry, dull, empty, meaningless. It would be absolutely an unintelligible foreign language! It seems as if some physical conformation made it impossible for certain races and types of mind to keep many threads of thought truly balanced and adjusted. The history of the Eastern States of Europe, with their never-ending plots and counterplots and conspiracies and revolutions and changes of dynasty and of monarchs, seems to be merely the effect of incapacity to restrain temperamental impulses from distorting certain individual factors in the situation out of all proportion and upsetting the subtle adjustment of the millions of factors that have to be taken into account. The way in which incapacity to keep a number of things in mind at once reveals itself is also illustrated by the familiar fact that old people, when their powers of mind grow feeble, are either perpetually changing their minds because different claims present themselves independently instead of in relation to one another, or become violently narrow-minded and impervious to argument, because they feel their only chance of keeping in a straight course is to rivet themselves on to some one thing that seems to have worked right when their powers of mind were more active. The highest forms of modern European music are such as address themselves to the higher natures. They are the very subtlest counterparts of the mental development, the infinite complexities of social organization, of the human types, the phases of religion, the phases of philosophy, the alternate predominance of materialism

and idealism, everything which is included under the strangely compounded western conception of civilization! The power of patient co-ordination which qualifies a people for self-government is the same which has made the development of musical art possible. Races which are not capable of such co-ordination must remain incapable of fully understanding such highly organized art.

But the pity of it is that the attitude of mind of so many western people towards their highest types of art should result in their being quite as incapable of appreciating real music as the orientals. The ancient conventions of classes may be just as obstructive as the deficiencies of brain formation. Perhaps in time they induce them! But in any case the full valuation of really great works of art is like most other things, a matter of co-operation. The great works of art are ultimately found out by many people who have many different kinds of receptivity. One type of man receives and assimilates what suits his particular mental and temperamental constitution, and judges it from his own point of view; and another of totally different capacity and disposition judges it from another point of view; and as more and more different types, such as the emotional, the sensuous, the ingenious, the impulsive, the romantic, the fantastic, the gay, the despondent, the pessimistic, the generous, the courageous, the hedonistic, the vigorous, the ardent, all come to seek for the particular flavours that suit their palate or the ideals that suit their souls, the work of art that comprises the largest number of appeals has the best guarantee of permanence.

The work that has the most sides lays hold of the most minds; and it also lays hold of the best

minds, because the best minds are those which are most capable of seeing many sides of the same question ! They see many sides of a question because their outfit is more complete than that of the inefficient mind. It is not a matter over which men would really dispute when brought face to face with it. It is only in those unfortunate times when a wave of temporary demoralization takes possession of society, that millions defend the effect of universal indulgence in mental indolence and dissipation and short-sighted selfishness in lowering the general standard of thoroughness ; and assert their right to judge in matters to which they have not given their minds, and eagerly follow those who flatter their self-complacency and take advantage of their infinitely wonderful capacity for being hoaxed by specious phrase makers and cunning false prophets. The type of mind to which the higher art is offered is not only that which can see many sides, but which has the essential higher mental qualities which make for efficiency, such as capacity of attention, capacity of endurance, capacity of memory, capacity of recognition, capacity of resistance to purely sensuous distractions, quickness of apprehension, sense of proportion, judgment, vigour, generosity, patience, steadfastness, vitality, instinct of association, and power to discern the relations of countless things and adjust their apparent contradictions. The whole development of true art is devised to engage more and more of the finer mental qualities. Its object is to appeal to types of mind which have the richest outfit of the finest qualities, and one of its greatest joys is to find that it helps the imperfectly provided mind to attain fuller measure of the finer qualities.

From whichever point of view the matter is looked at the genuine thing justifies itself for the same reason. The personality of a great composer or a great poet appeals to a vast number of his fellow-creatures by being mentally and temperamentally many-sided, and by satisfying different types of men and higher types of mind by many different kinds of excellence. The limited poet or composer gets response only from the comparatively few whose minds are of the particular shape to suit his utterances, and his influence is soon exhausted. It is the higher type of mind which is the most efficient, that gets things actually done; and that is the reason why the verdicts of one generation are so often upset by the generation that comes after. While the multitude of superficial minds are in ecstasies about the merely superficial attractions, the more efficient minds are finding out the things which are wider, more comprehensive, and deeper rooted. It is of the nature of the superficial mind, as was pointed out at the beginning, to pass from one thing to another; so its ecstasy for some specially brilliant superficiality presently evaporates, and it leaves it to look for something else that will afford it a new sensation; and if the work which has given temporary gratification has not the qualities which appeal to the higher type of mind such work shortly disappears into space. Whereas when the minds that are effectual work-producing instruments take hold of a work of art they do not let go, and by slow degrees the better kind of the lesser minds follow. The public mind is even made to grow, for it is always willing to be led to the finer type of enjoyments, if it can only feel sure that it is being led by men who really understand. And it is

not only the casual public that grows by contact with many-sided art. The familiar expression of a work of art "growing upon" any one means that a man begins by appreciating the special qualities which are congenial to his particular limitations, and, having that link established with the work, by degrees becomes aware of other fine qualities which at first meeting would not appeal to him. And the work then not only seems to grow in him but it makes him grow, because it opens up new perceptions, new channels of fine enjoyment, new spheres of understanding. It widens the whole field of his life.

So it is that a thing becomes permanently interesting not because it stands imposing and impregnable in its perfections, but because it either lives in itself, or in the fresh things which people go on finding out about it. It may be admitted that men find out new things about what is familiarly called shoddy after a while. But that is different. If their minds had been reasonably developed in the outset there would have been no occasion to be acquainted with shoddy at all. Shoddy exists either because men's resources of information are inadequate or because they do not avail themselves of what information there is.

The difference between shoddy and the real thing is that when a man finds out the unexpected in shoddy, he wants to be done with it for ever as soon as possible; and when he finds out the unexpected in the real thing it makes him cherish it and cleave to it, and seek to know more and more about it. To be permanently interesting things must be in a sense alive, and must go on revealing themselves in new phases. People's minds are developed by finding out fresh



things about things they think they know. It too frequently happens that when the things that are to be found out about a work of art are exhausted it ceases to be alive. The more phases there are in a work of art the greater is the variety of possible relations which may reveal themselves between those several phases ; and the more possibility there is that men may be constantly rejoicing in finding something new in it.

It might appear from this that all mature art which is to be permanent must be infinitely complex. That is the unfortunate misconception which aggravates the indolence of so many people, and prevents their trying to open the door in their minds that might let in such a flood of good things. It is on the contrary quite obvious that some of the very simplest things have had the most permanent hold on humanity. It is the basis of some astonishingly simple fact, that gives many of the greatest works of literature their permanence. But it is not their simplicity that makes them permanent, but the fact that the simplicity proves true in all manner of new contingencies. The work may look ever so simple in itself, but in order to satisfy the infinite varieties of mental calibre that come into contact with it, it has to be true in its relation to an infinity of other things. The situation is not altered. The simple thing that has quality is still only capable of being gauged and enjoyed by the higher type of mind, because the lower type will not be conscious of the things outside the simple thing which make it wonderful and satisfying by the justness of its relation to them. The simplest things are mainly those in which the virtue of economy is practised to the extreme limits of possibility. The

difference between economy and poverty can only be gauged by the amount of life they respectively produce in the mind.

It is, however, a sad fact that simplicity becomes in a sense less easy as life in general becomes more complex. Whether a man uses them or not the resources of art of his time are available to him; and if he does not make use of them it is either because he has not sufficient energy or sufficient sincerity, or because in relation to art his mental outfit is limited.

In other words, the composer has among other things to recognize and admit the generation to which he belongs, with all its infinite complications and philosophies and methods of thought and art, and the virtues and vices which are the offspring of the virtues and vices of simpler times gone by, but which it is of no use whatever to pretend to be the same as their simple old grandparents.

It is true that the conditions in which quality is manifested vary in every age, and are proportionate to every successive stage of human development. It is the sphere of the very highest instinct to divine the real quality of an art product even of an immature period; that is, to divine the genuineness of a work which, when judged by higher standards of method, would be manifestly and even grotesquely imperfect. A great personality shines through the imperfections of workmanship in such a case, and the instinct which divines sincerity discounts the inadequacies. Heinrich Schütz, Purcell, Buxtehude, Gluck, and even now and then Monteverde, are permanently interesting in spite of the deficiencies which insufficiently developed methods made inevit-

able. They ring true as far as the standard of art of their time allowed.

Here, again, it is necessary to recall that every period of art is recognizable by certain types of phraseology. The influences of association and suggestion are strongest when the human creature is especially susceptible, when its nerves are most alive. The nerves of the healthy majority are most alive when they are projecting their minds to the appreciation of art. Consequently certain formulas of melody, certain tricks of procedure, certain progressions of harmony, meet with universal appreciation, and the influence of suggestion induces general favour to extend itself to those artistic types of expression. It follows that these formulas are redolent of certain definite periods and conditions of society; and it is hardly possible for the minds of the initiated to avoid those associations when characteristic phrases present themselves. They tell their tale to those who have any understanding almost infallibly. They thus become the most subtle indicators of dishonest intention and of futile-mindedness that exist, and they apply not only to periods but to places, races, and even to strata of society.

A homely instance from things which happen in the present day will be helpful. The phraseology of the baser kind of music-hall is associated with slang, looseness and levity, but it appeals mightily to the very lowest order of mind. When a composer introduces a phrase or a formula belonging to the music-halls in religious music or music which purports to arouse religious feelings, he ignores the power of association to recall the same kind of feelings as would be induced in a music-hall.

He merely endeavours to excite human creatures by such means as are available, and then to make their minds turn to thoughts of heaven and salvation! As far as such music pretends to be religious nothing in the whole world could possibly be more remote from the fact. And it is only because people's minds are so inactive and undeveloped as yet in connection with music that they do not perceive it.

The use of phrases and types of thought which do not belong to the period or locality of art, but suggest associations which are at variance with its pretensions, is one of the most fruitful sources of vulgarity, which always resolves itself in the end into being a mean form of lying. Associations pervade the whole range of art, and no man whatever can escape them. The bearing of all this on the question of simplicity is that the music of any period or place cannot escape the associations of that period; and the procession of periods indicates a standard of human development which is always increasing in complexity. The misfortune of the affectation of being simple in conditions which do not justify it, is that the associations betray falseness instantly.

Yet the truth is quite the reverse of what is commonly held. It is possible that art may still be simple. But the simplicity that is meant is the sum of everything; and only the almost superhumanly great can attain to it and survive. The simplicity of the mind lower down is the simplicity of a by-road or of a parish that has successfully shut itself out from progressive influences; and yet has been obliged to use the phraseology which betrays the age and place to which it belongs, and the fact that it is trying to pretend not to belong to it.

The power of association is all the greater because a man is not critically conscious, in the act of art-production, of these lesser details which give rise to it. So it comes about that the associatory qualities of the texture and thematic material of compositions show the true temperamental equation of the man. When a man is unconsciously drawn towards the finest and purest types of expression, and chooses those which have been certified by the usage of all the greatest and noblest natures, it is a matter of certainty that his work will have one of the surest tokens of quality. If he is drawn to the exaggerations, distortions, unpleasant flavours, the brazen violence, and brutish exuberance which amuse those who have not discovered the most serviceable uses of the mind, he may astonish, but he will not continue permanently to delight.

The personality is revealed through such associations. The consistency of the personality is the proof of sincerity, and the most absolute and indispensable requirement of the very highest quality is sincerity. It is useless to pretend that human creatures do not find it out in the end. A man may impose upon a whole generation by flattering their weaknesses; but when the time comes to sum up and see the product in relation to the rest of the great field of art—which represents the highest manifestations of the spirit of man—those who concern themselves with such things are obliged to discern where the truth lies; and to put the insincere work, however clever, into its true category—among the baser things!

And yet again it is only to be estimated by the minds which can see the greatest number of things in their true relations; or by the hosts of minds

which see it from many points of view. The indolence of the individual is counterbalanced by the energy of the multitude, simply because individual indolence causes inconvenience to other individuals and generates friction, and friction generates heat, and heat is a mode of motion; and in motion the things that are genuinely well made are the things that are on the whole most likely to survive. The misfortune is that when people indolently decline to develop their minds, which are the most invaluable possessions of human creatures, the means to everything whatever, including the highest enjoyments, they most especially lay themselves open to being imposed upon. And when a man is imposed upon he is not a gainer, but a loser, because a man gets imposed upon by somebody finding out where he is weak. The danger of the moment in every department of existence is that the multitude of the uninitiated are herding together to proclaim that they know what they like, and that is sufficient for them; the result of which is that they offer themselves, even eagerly, to the disposal of every cheap-jack that passes by. It is a phase which humanity goes through periodically. The many who have not perceived for how much the mind counts forget that things cannot be tested without the training and knowledge of the mind which gives the capacity to judge. It is a mere truism after all that quality is mainly discernible by those that have the greatest mental capacity, and that permanence is the result of surviving satisfactorily the critical scrutiny of generations. People dislike truisms partly because they are obviously true and partly because they are so often at variance with what they want to be true; and in many

cases it is almost a public duty to utter them quite often.

Those who are at all awake see on every side the encroachments of what is called materialism. Materialism is merely the preference for the lower pleasures of sense rather than for the higher pleasures of mind. The peculiarity of the material sensuous pleasures is that they induce every kind of falseness and vulgarity, and seem to evoke the most odious qualities of humanity — greed, vanity, arrogance, cynicism, dishonesty, hatred, and corruption.

Music at the moment is one of the most hopeful antidotes to such materialism, but only so when it is of the highest quality. Trivial and false music debases the minds that take their pleasure in it. Real music appeals to the higher faculties and also enhances them. If it is to be effective in any wide social sense it must be of the very best quality. It is only through its being of such quality that it can really establish its right to be one of the greatest spheres of mental enjoyment as distinguished from mere material pleasures, and an antidote to the beguilements of the senses. So those who hope that the race will still go on to constantly improving conditions may well give their attention to the question of its quality.

For quality is that which justifies itself to countless various types of mind and endures,—by ideas that are true and sincere, by texture that is honest and characteristic, by style that is apt, by organization that is convincing, by individuality that is interesting, by diction that is pure, by gaiety that is not blatant, by melancholy that has hope in it, by consistency of thought, by scope of imagination, by humanity

that is generous, and by strength that is kindly to weakness.

Such quality proves ultimately to be the appeal of the finest and most ardent spirits to the spiritual ears of such as can meet them on the highest ground ; and by such converse humanity threads its way through its bewilderments towards the light.



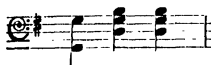


## APPENDIX

### I

*In connection with page 97.*

THE most widely diffused, and in many cases the most absurd, example of the transference of a special formula, from the conditions for which it was devised to others in which it is only intelligible by convention or by association, is that of the formula which may be described as the left-hand formula of dance music; of which the following may serve as a typical example:—



It was obviously devised originally for a keyed instrument; as the right hand being required to be entirely free to deal with the tune, the left hand has both to define the harmony and to emphasize the rhythm. The thump on the first beat of the bar serves at once to indicate the bass of the harmony and the strong beat of the rhythm, and the two chords which follow indicate the weak beats and supply the rest of the harmony. Realizing what is required to be done in the simplest and most unpretentious manner, the device may be acknowledged to be even remarkably ingenious. It has evidently effected what is wanted so satisfactorily that it has been accepted all the world over wherever the influences of what is called Western civilization prevail; and as it is not found in any musical system but that which has grown up in connection

with Western ideas, it may be accepted as one of its most infallible tokens; for it has become so universal that it is improbable that any human beings, from Tasmania or the Falkland Islands in the South to Alaska in the North and round to Vladivostock eastwards, could escape hearing it at some period of their lives. It serves by courtesy as the accompaniment to millions of dance tunes, and as long as the tunes are confined to keyed instruments, or instruments which are played by a pluck of the fingers, such as a guitar, not only is it explicable, but it would be difficult to find any formula which would answer its purpose better. But its excessive familiarity has resulted in its acceptance also where orchestras and bands and all sorts of instruments in combination are used; and not only that, but as a generally accepted formula for light songs in operas and elsewhere, where its reason for existence can only be mere familiarity. For the isolated grunt of the bass instrument on the first beat of the bar, and the silence of the other instruments on that beat—resembling what in colloquial language is known as a “hiccup”—and the repetition by those instruments of only a part of the harmony on the weak beats of the metric group, can only be regarded as essentially ridiculous when performed by several instruments in combination. It may be taken as a strong illustration of the difference between music which is taken seriously as art and music which serves the purpose of frank and thoughtless gaiety. For no serious composer when he is serious would ever deign to employ it. Nevertheless, it is very interesting as an instance of the way in which more or less artistic devices come into being; for without keyed instruments or instruments of the guitar type it never could have been thought of, and it is only intelligible through association with such instruments. But such is the force of habit that millions of human beings listen to it daily in conditions for which it was not devised, and take it for granted.

## II

Since the passage on page 422 was written, referring to the power of association to revive impressions and feelings which have been strongly connected with certain types of phraseology or even passages of melody, a remarkably confirmatory illustration has been kindly supplied by Bishop Johnson, who had opportunities to make intimate acquaintance with primitive races and their ways when he was Bishop of Calcutta. He writes as follows :

“Our mutual friend Sir William Bigge tells me that you were interested in an account of an experience I had in India when dealing with the subject of using old native tunes with Christian hymns, and that you would like to have from me a full statement of the facts.

“I should begin by stating that the people concerned are not Hindus, but belong to one of the aboriginal races, the Santhals, occupying a hill district, a north-eastern offshoot of the Vindya range of mountains, which stretch right across India and form the southern boundary of the great Ganges Valley. The Santhals are a very interesting people, superior in intelligence to most of these tribes, and from amongst them a considerable body of Christians has been drawn, and I was able to select some for ordination.

“Their habits and customs are extremely primitive, and amongst other things their musical efforts are of the very simplest character, while at the same time they can produce wonderful effects in the way of stirring or plaintive tunes, if we may so call them. I could not help often pondering over the mysterious influence music has upon us all, even such primitive folk as these.

“On the occasion of one of my visits to this Mission, I held a conference at which were present the European missionaries, the native clergy, and leading native laymen from each parish or district; and one of the subjects referred to me for advice was on the desirability or otherwise

of trying to preserve some of their native music by adapting it to Christian hymns. I was decidedly in favour of endeavouring so to preserve it, and we had about come to a conclusion that this attempt should be made, when an old man, hearing what was about to be decided, exclaimed, 'Oh no, Sahib; no, no! whenever I hear the old music the Devil comes into me, and I forget that I am a Christian.'"

The Bishop's account seems to impel the mind to recall the saying attributed to Wesley, that "he did not see why the Devil should have all the best tunes." As a matter of fact he does not have any of them. It is only people who are not capable of appreciating the best tunes who would think he had. But when such people try to adapt what Wesley meant by the Devil's tunes to purposes which are not in the Devil's province, even they cannot escape the influences of association; for in spite of themselves the transplanted tunes would influence their minds and arouse feelings akin to those in connection with which the tunes came into existence.

In connection with style the matter is of the very widest significance—as this power of association supplies the reason for the feeling of distaste which every one endowed with any sense of perception has when a poet or a composer drops from a fine and dignified manner of dealing with fine and dignified thoughts to common and trivial phraseology which is intimately associated with crude and vulgar phases of existence.

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